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# THE HERBERT SPENCER LECTURE

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# HERBERT SPENCER

THE circumstances under which I am invited to address this University bear emphatic witness to the profound and world-wide influence of Herbert Spencer. A Hindoo gentleman, once responsible for the government of a native Indian state, and a Master of Arts of Balliol College, has endowed a Lectureship in the name of our English philosopher. The University, in the broad spirit of its culture that Spencer himself so curiously misunderstood, has accepted this commemoration of the founder of a System, which, to say the least, ignored both its immemorial theology and its ancient learning. And now, by the choice of the founder of this Lectureship and of the Academic authorities, one is called to open this Course whose only claim to philosophy is that for thirty years he has sought to explain and to propagate the system of a French philosopher to whom Spencer declared himself opposed on many points. He certainly coincided with him on many others. These points were quite as essential, and some differences also may be reconciled in the end. Philosophy, to be worthy of its name, must ever embrace and reconcile fundamental differences of view.

It will not be supposed that I come here to revive any former controversies or to start any new. For forty years I enjoyed the friendship and valued the advice of Mr. Spencer. For many years I was in close touch with him and with his most intimate

associates, so that I had ample opportunity of becoming familiar with the inner story of his long intellectual martyrdom to his high purpose. In public and in private I have never ceased to express all the admiration I felt for his grand intelligence, for his tenacious devotion to duty, and his truly marvellous perseverance. At his death I expressed my deep sense that our country had lost its most eminent philosopher. And I shall not depart from that spirit of grateful reverence.

But, again, this is no occasion for an apodictic eulogy. I come here to speak of a system of philosophy—not to praise a man in words of idle rhetoric. As this is the first of these Lectures, as I was myself in touch so long and so closely with Herbert Spencer the man, and not simply the author of books, it will be right for me to begin with some personal reminiscences. I shall then seek to call attention to the permanent significance of the Synthetic Philosophy, without pretending to conceal what I hold to be its aspects of weakness and narrowness, but without venturing to insist on or to develop these points of difference. And finally, I shall ask your indulgence if I try to sketch in slight outline those conditions of logic, of science, of human psychology, which must be fulfilled by any scheme of *Synthesis* worthy of that great name, apart from the special doctrines whether of Spencer or of Comte.

I use true but guarded words if I venture to say that, in the judgement of foreign as well as of English thought, Herbert Spencer was the most prominent English philosopher of the nineteenth century. I do not say the greatest man of science, or the subtlest metaphysician, or the most creative genius, but the philosopher whose ideas have had the widest range,

and have commanded at home and abroad the most penetrating power. This judgement rests on the fact of the very rare band of those who can be called ilosophers, and of the infinite difficulty of the task constructing anything that can be treated as a nthesis of human knowledge. In a world saturated th departmental research and with specialist learning, e effect of a synthetic co-ordination of ideas forces tion and stirs the imagination of all serious whether they accept or reject the special usions of the system.

any case, all can do justice to a noble life of otion to social duty and a grand ideal. The story f Spencer's life has been one of almost unexampled absorption in the vast task to which he dedicated himself from youth. The record of British philosophy can hardly furnish an instance of perseverance in labour so continuous, so protracted, so beset with difficulties and obstacles of all kinds—scanty means, desultory training, oppressive neglect, bodily suffering—in a career wherein profit, honour, and success were hardly to be expected, or came so late as to be little valued. For more than forty years he laboured to build up his encyclopaedic system step by step, without for an hour swerving from his aim, or sacrificing one of his rigid rules of life. Personal tastes could not draw him, nor could obstacles deter him, from his goal. Enjoying the society of cultivated men and women, as he did, and forced to accept involuntary leisure from the state of his health, he yet habitually shunned every social distraction. No prospect of gain, no hope of rest, no fear of destitution, no prostration by disease, ever tempted him, or ever drove him from his allotted task. No man ever

more entirely fulfilled the maxim of the French poet, which another philosopher took for his favourite device: '*What is it that makes a great life? It is the ideal of youth carried out in mature age.*' It is thus that, almost alone of modern philosophers, Herbert Spencer achieved all that he purposed, and perhaps all that he was capable of completing.

This abnormal power of philosophic detachment from the vulgar interests and pursuits of ordinary life enabled Spencer to achieve his end in spite of the unremitting pressure of physical ailments. It would be difficult to find another example of vast intellectual performance carried through against incessant recurrence of prostrating ill-health. The posthumous *Autobiography*, with its diaries, letters, and memoranda, reveals what, even to his intimate friends was not fully known, the degree to which the philosopher was perpetually incapacitated from all mental work. His physique was good and his health sufficient in early life. But at thirty-five he suffered from a break-down which left him a permanent invalid, so far as continuous mental attention was concerned. Dyspepsia, insomnia, nervous irritability dogged him for the rest of his life. His labour was continually interrupted for weeks and even for months together. At no period after middle life was he ever capable of more than three hours of reading or dictation in each day. The effort of composition was seldom continued for more than half an hour, or even ten minutes, without a pause to rest. After a few hours of work he was unable, during the rest of the day, even to read a novel or to engage in general conversation. The slightest mental effort, or the most ordinary excitement, brought on that cerebral congestion which cut him off from

books, from society, from sleep, and even artistic amusement. Fishing, sailing, and strolling along the seaside were the only solace of these cerebral disorders. The extraordinarily scanty time which Spencer could give to reading, to composition, or even to meditation, and yet the achievement of so vast a result—this remains a problem for psychologists and biologists to solve. Professor Huxley told me that he had never met a man who had so great a power to pick the brain of a competent student. For many years Spencer lived in close intellectual commerce with men of special authority in all the natural sciences. In these days when we hear so much of exhausting study and over-pressure, it is well to remind young students what achievements are possible to the Darwins, the Carlyles, and the Spencers, by the intense concentration of their brain-power, rather than by the long hours they spend at their desk.

Spencer stands forth amid all our English philosophers since Bacon, as having deliberately set to himself, for the task of his life, the framing a *Synthesis* of Knowledge—a Science of the Sciences—a System whereby all human ideas, scientific, moral and social, could be harmonized in one dominant concatenation or correlation. To Spencer, *Synthesis* meant a real organization of the sciences, the binding up of all special learning into an organic unity—vitalized in every cell of the encyclopaedic mass by creative and omnipresent ideas, themselves inspired and controlled by one governing conception. In this ideal Spencer (amongst us) stood alone. The *Synthetic Philosophy* is (in Britain) unique. No British philosopher, unless it were Roger or Francis Bacon, has conceived, or even adumbrated, anything of the kind. And we know how rudimentary were the

sciences in the time of either Bacon, how hopeless a dream it was for either to presume to organize general science. Utterly unlike Francis Bacon as was Spencer, in character, in life, and in brain, even the antithesis of Francis Bacon in many things, the critics both at home and abroad have constantly compared them and contrasted them, by reason of the encyclopaedic nature of their studies and the synthetic power of their genius. And for this there is a certain warrant in fact. That of which Francis Bacon dreamed with his luminous imagination Spencer planned out with a far sounder scientific basis and a less utopian ambition. Spencer thereby remains our one synthetic philosopher. Whether that Synthesis has yet been, or is ever destined to be, accepted as adequate is a problem which we may presently consider. But its rare power to rivet the attention of the thinking world, and to plant the seeds of an infinite crop of fertile conceptions, can hardly be gainsaid by any serious student of the evolution of modern thought.

Whether one can rest satisfied with such a symmetrical solution of the mysteries of the Universe, whether any Synthesis of the Universe as a whole be a practicable problem, to be solved as yet, or indeed at any future time, we can all do justice to the magnificent vision of a coherent Synthesis, a system combining physical and sociologic knowledge in one scheme. And we all bow down to the heroic courage with which Herbert Spencer put aside pleasures and rewards in the long strain after his supreme idea. The literary and scientific world in Europe, in America, and in the Far East does homage to this devotion to the ideal of a Synthetic Philosophy. To many it comes like the dawn of a new era, in an age absorbed in the infinite analyses of fissiparous specialism.

It seems to offer a possible clue to the mighty labyrinth within which we still wander almost without hope.

The men who succeed in organizing any scheme of general thought, in such a way as to command the attention of all those in the civilized world who devote themselves to philosophy and to science, are so infinitely few—the resources needed even to attempt such a task are so complex and so rare—their labours are so precious to the advancement of human thought, that we judge their work to be worthy of study and honour, even if we find manifest errors in certain parts, and they fail to satisfy their generation. Consider the sophisms now acknowledged to ruin some of the most famous philosophies of the past. Remember how small after all is the residuum of permanent truth accepted as the contribution to human thought of the most illustrious thinkers of old. For some two thousand years the noble utopia of Plato has been an armoury of pregnant ideas to the religious and speculative conceptions of the entire West. We can smile at his exquisite fantasies and his airy hypotheses—yet we ponder him with delight, and refashion his gorgeous cloudland again and again—*amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas.* On what wings of unstable wax did the two Bacons essay to rise into the empyrean and face the Sun of truth! How puerile seem to us now Descartes' *vortices* and not a little in Hume's arid dogmatism and in Hegel's paradoxical transcendentalism with its identity of contradictories. And withal, how great and how just is the reputation of these men!

The truly general syntheses are so extraordinarily few in the history of the human mind, they lead to such wide and unexpected results when they stir the interest of the philosophic world, that any substantial

synthesis lives and moulds opinion, even when its details are rejected and its conclusions are ignored. To put aside the ancients, Aristotle, Plato, and their derivative schools; to put aside the mediaeval logicians, Albert, Roger Bacon, Aquinas, all of whom constructed provisional and indeed illusory syntheses of a kind, under the dominant theology and metaphysics; to come to the moderns, we can only name with assurance Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant, and Hegel. Neither Francis Bacon, nor Hobbes, nor Locke, nor Hume, nor Diderot, nor Montesquieu, nor Bentham, Mill, or Hamilton, attempted what a true Synthesis demands—a general co-ordination of all the sciences, a harmony of the moral and the physical worlds as we know them. Nor, in our own generation, can I count more than two such schemes of general knowledge—the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, and the Evolutionary Philosophy of Herbert Spencer. It is no paradox that, in philosophy, a systematic co-ordination of ideas may ultimately be judged as abortive, and yet may remain one of the landmarks of human thought and a monument of human genius.

Consider the far-reaching and incalculable effects upon all subsequent thought of such fundamental conceptions as those of Bacon's *Organum*, Descartes' *Meditations*, Newton's *Principia*, Hume's *Essays*, Kant's *Kritik*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*. These effects are quite distinct from acceptance of the whole of these conceptions as irrefragable truth. An age which has dedicated its industry to infinitesimal analysis and an almost jealous specialism is too apt to slight the power of the imagination in the service of a great constructive brain. Philosophy, like poetry itself, can do nothing abiding without the synthetic imagination. To limit

the attention to flaws in the details of a symmetrical scheme of ideas is like wasting time over anachronisms in the *Iliad*, or false astronomy in the *Divine Comedy*.

What is the true definition of *Philosophy*—what of *Synthesis*—what of *Evolution*? Philosophy means *ultimate generalization*. Spencer correctly defined it as 'knowledge completely unified.' Our first crude observations are special, local, disparate. Science only begins with the colligation of crude separate observations. Each general science implies the colligation of a large body of departmental generalizations. The generalization of all the general sciences in their ultimate co-ordination is philosophy. Such is Spencer's own account of it; and, no doubt, with modifications in language, such an account of philosophy would be generally, or at least very widely, accepted. Well! it was to the search for such ultimate generalization of all general scientific conceptions that Spencer dedicated his life—a task which so very few in the history of human thought have ever attempted—in which almost no one has succeeded.

Now, as to the meaning of *Synthesis*—an indispensable word which is needed not only for philosophy but for all serious thought. Synthesis—the converse of analysis—is the co-ordination of general conclusions. All real philosophy, no doubt, is synthetic—a term introduced long ago by Comte, which Comte and Spencer incessantly employ. By a 'Synthetic System of Philosophy' Spencer seems to have understood a system which propounded a harmony of all the known sciences, as distinct from any system of transcendental Ontology. In that sense the 'Synthetic System' of Spencer and the 'Positive Philosophy' of Comte mean entirely the same thing. Both mean the ultimate

generalization of the whole field of real knowledge, the co-ordination of all positive science. Theology, Ontology, Cosmogony stand outside both systems—in the void and formless infinite of the Unknown.

Let us turn to define *Evolution*—a word about which much ambiguity exists. In its narrower sense 'Evolution,' a term not at first used by Darwin, means the morphological and physiological variations of organic beings by the action of natural selection. It then came to be loosely applied to almost any specific theory about the origin and development of things. At one time to doubt such a dogmatic genesis was to risk being charged as an unbeliever in Darwin's great theory of animal transformation. I used to think that Professor Huxley looked on 'Evolution' as the *nom de guerre* of the Royal Society, or perhaps even of its most eloquent Fellow. But 'Evolution' in the hands of Herbert Spencer meant something quite different: far wider in scope and more philosophic in spirit. Spencer meant by Evolution a theory of the gradual development of all phenomena, cosmical and physical, human and moral, under a set of dominant and co-ordinate principles. These principles were to form the ultimate generalization of all the Sciences; they had to explain and harmonize them all under a vast clarifying searchlight.

Now Spencer's conception of Evolution, as formulated in his famous propositions, is a Synthesis far wider than any theory of Darwin's, not at all comparable with it, and in general idea even anterior to the theories of Darwin by date of publication. Darwin certainly, and not Spencer, was the originator of the strictly biological law, inductively proved, of the modification of organic beings by natural selection and some other

agencies. Spencer very soon adopted this view, incorporated it in his own system, and to the last maintained important qualifications of it as essential. But, even prior to the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Spencer, from 1852 downwards, had stated his general law of Evolution, using that term which had been common in French philosophy for more than a century, but always falling short of the theory of Natural Selection in the struggle for life.

And then, in 1860, Spencer put forth his encyclopaedic scheme of a general philosophy, based upon the laws of Evolution as applicable to the whole field of human knowledge—cosmical, material, vital, and human. Spencer's conception of Evolution, though it incorporated Darwin's laws as to the mutability of species, is not only utterly different from pure Darwinian Evolution, but is not commensurable with it. We could no more compare them than we can compare Kepler's laws of planetary motion with Bacon's Inductive method. Darwin was a naturalist: Spencer was a philosopher. And no one was more ready than Darwin himself to recognize the difference and the higher rank of the philosopher. Darwin rarely quits the ground of multiple inductions and massive observations of the organic world. Spencer was no specialist. He attempted a general co-ordination of phenomena, cosmical and human, dealing very largely in abstract propositions; using the deductive method even more than the inductive; using logic and hypothesis quite as much as observation. Not only is Spencer's Evolution disparate from Darwin's, but, to the last, Spencer maintained special views as to the Factors of Organic Evolution. He held to the inheritance of modifications that had been functionally produced during active life—

a view which has not obtained the assent of most competent biologists.

I face the inevitable question—Does Philosophy really mean 'a science of the sciences'? Is any harmony or correlation of all human knowledge either possible or needful? Well, if not, then *cadit quaestio*, and Spencer's claim to be a philosopher falls to the ground, whatever his claims to acute thoughts on biology, sociology, and ethic. We well know the energy and ability of the many schools of thought—theological, idealist, and ontological (or it may be sceptical)—which would maintain that the only Philosophy is one that is concerned with the mystery of the Universe and the soul of man; that human science cannot attain to the higher knowledge or to any generalized truth; that each branch of knowledge rests independent by itself, incapable of any ultimate generalization or real co-ordination at all. With such schools the true Spencerian does not dispute. He awaits the verdict of the ages—*securus iudicat orbis terrarum*. By their fruits you shall know them!

If there were indeed a final bar to synthesis, how do we account for the deep reverberation through the civilized world of the name and ideas of Herbert Spencer? That name, those ideas, have permeated East and West, science, philosophy, and literature, wherever culture exists. It is an illuminating influence that may be compared with the influence upon subsequent thought of the ideas of Bacon, of Hume, of Kant. His works have been translated into nearly all European languages. They are read and studied in India, in China, in Japan. In the vast reading public of America they are far more widely known and esteemed than even in our own country. At his death the journals,

the lecture halls, the pulpits of Christendom resounded with accounts of his life and work. In no nation had a deeper impression been made, we are told by an eminent native disciple, than in Japan. The *Sociology* has been translated into Chinese. Churches, Chapels, Synagogues, Ethicists, Secularists and Positivists, hailed Spencer as a leading philosopher of his time. A diligent friend has collected in three folio volumes this immense consensus of tributes in all the languages of Europe. Can it be that all this chorus of admiration and interest was aroused by what was after all (some might say) a pretentious dream, as baseless as the 'Ideas' of Plato and far less poetical? No! It testifies to the insatiable craving of the human mind for some coherent system of thought—the invincible instinct that human science is not a bubble of the imagination, that as science means a generalization of observations, so the sciences in the sum are capable of some ultimate generalization, some co-ordination, some organic relation to each other.

Is then the ultimate generalization of Spencer destined to achieve general, and final, acceptance? It is not for me to presume to answer such a question—all the more that, as I began by saying, I have been trained in a school from which Spencer continually insisted on his own dissent. But there are deep underlying axioms in the Synthetic Philosophy of Spencer which entirely coincide with all types of the Philosophy of Experience, as distinct from all Metaphysical and Intuitional Schools of Thought. They run on parallel, if not identical, lines with all types of what may be called Positive systems in the widest sense, so as to include those of Comte, Darwin, Littré, Mill, Buckle, Clifford, Huxley, Bain, and Lewes. These fundamental points are (1) *the universal reign of law* in all branches

of human cognition: that all true knowledge recognizes and rests on some invariable order of phenomena in all things subject to human observation, whether in the material or the moral world. (2) Next comes the *law of constant evolution*, the development of each cognizable state from a preceding state under the operation of regular influences and conditions. (3) Thirdly, the *relativity of knowledge* is a universal axiom; the *absolute* being beyond the bounds of human knowledge, and in its nature truly unthinkable. (4) Fourthly, Philosophy *relegates unverifiable hypotheses* to a world outside positive science. (5) The *Telos of Philosophy* is a constructive reorganization of all human knowledge in a *synthesis*, or correlation of parts. (6) The *Telos of human life* is the practical and continuous *amelioration of* the material, social, and moral conditions of *the Human Organism*—the unity of the Brotherhood of Man on this planet. In all these fundamental bases of thought Spencer's System coincides with all types of *positive* philosophy. They can only be displaced by the final triumph of some form of theological and intuitional belief.

But at this point, I mean with the acceptance of these six principles, and all their many corollaries, Spencer parts company with the other schools of the Philosophy of Experience, certainly with the *positive* school, strictly so called. Spencer takes a new and a wholly different position—a ground where he is entirely independent and unique. So far as I know, Spencer, with those who follow him, stands alone amongst all philosophers of any experimental and naturalist school in propounding an objective theory of the Universe. Of course, the theological, idealist, and ontological schools of thought have ever regarded it as the crown of philosophy

to solve the mystery of the Universe. But Spencer alone has ventured to face this abysmal problem by a scheme of logical deductions from the positive sciences, from the experience of a multiplicity of real observations of the phenomena of Nature and Man. What the 'Ideas' were to Plato, or the Church to Aquinas, or the Categories to Kant, that, and more than that, Evolution is to Spencer. 'Throughout the Universe, in general and in detail, there is an unceasing redistribution of matter and motion.' Thus he opens his new Book of Genesis.

Surely, the most ardent Spencerian will hardly contend that this enormous claim has been admitted as yet at the tribunal of contemporary philosophy. To my own humble intelligence it sounds a paradox to find one, who is so keen a believer in the relativity of all knowledge, so ruthless an antagonist of any dogmatizing about the Absolute or Unconditioned Existence, the apostle, in fact, of the limitless and mystical Unknowable, the sad meditator on the infinitesimal littleness of man and his planetary speck amid the numberless millions of far grander suns—to find him, I say, revealing to us the Law of the whole Universe, on grounds, be it said, not of revelation, not of intuition, not on the *a priori* logic of *pure reason*, not of the still small voice innate in the human soul, but on grounds of demonstrated science, drawn from real observations and the record of our senses in experience.

According to the far humbler school in which I have been trained, any *Objective* synthesis, i.e. any co-ordination of our knowledge of phenomena according to their actual order *in rerum natura*, is an impossible Utopia. A true 'Cosmic philosophy,' to use the term of Spencer's American disciple, Prof. Fiske, is beyond the

range of our relative powers of mind. Any real synthesis of our knowledge of phenomena must be one relative to the powers of the human observation and reflection—not claiming to be any record of things as they are in the Universe. It is difficult to see how such a panorama of an objective world of things differs from the transcendental conception of 'Dinge an Sich.' The spectacle presented to our very limited powers of vision and of thought by such petty corner of the Unfathomable Universe as may be within our ken is still of itself so vast, so complex, so shifting, so subtle, and yet to us so infinite, that it must ever baffle our efforts to reach farther than a simple tabulation of what is within our range of mental vision. As well ask the painter of a grand landscape to draw, not what he sees from his standing-point, but every object which is actually present within the horizon—nay, beyond the horizon—and every object, not in just perspective as visible to the human eye, but in its actual proportion to all other objects around it.

I must assume that those who hear me are familiar with the famous sixteen propositions in which Spencer, in many successive publications, formulated what he called 'the cardinal principles developed in his works.' It was 'that process of transformation going on throughout the Cosmos as a whole, and in each larger or smaller part of it.' They know too how the final definition of Evolution ran thus: '*Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.*' And the Telos of the entire Synthetic Philosophy, as I understand it, is

to show that this law of evolution, with its corollary and associated laws, will explain the phenomena of our own world and our own race, as well as those of the Cosmos and of all things, organic and inorganic. These laws lie at the basis of Astronomy, Physics, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, and Ethics. These primary and universal laws would thus form a complete co-ordination of all our knowledge.

It is not assuming too much if we conclude that these laws are very widely admitted to possess, not only a very general application, but also to have a rare illuminating power in an immense number of special sciences. This would be admitted by most Physicists, and by the bulk of all adherents to the philosophy of experience. They constitute something which may be called a *Novum Organum* of scientific thought. But it would be, surely, going too far even for avowed Spencerians to claim, either, (1) that these laws are of *universal* application, or (2), that they form an adequate scheme of general science, a full synthesis of human knowledge. For my own part, admitting for these sixteen principles a high generality, and that they throw a most original light on philosophy, I must note some points in which we must await fresh elucidation.

If these sixteen propositions sum up the entire Synthetic Philosophy in germ, if the movement of Evolution and Dissolution, through alternate differentiation and integration, is the master-key of all science, then science is simply the law of the processes of Change. But the laws of *stability*, of permanence, are equally essential and dominant; indeed they come prior to laws of change. Using the terms in their true philosophic breadth, *Order* precedes *Progress*, determines it, and regulates it. *Progress is evolution out of Order.* That is to say, the course

of every development is irrevocably determined when the primordial type is constituted. The Child is father of the Man. But the child has all the essential organic features out of which the man is developed.

The orthodox Spencerian would possibly reply—there is no such thing as stability *in rerum natura*. Everything is in Evolution, from the solar system to the last theory about taxation, and the latest novelty in dress or in games. Absolutely, no doubt, we have no example of rigid immobility. The sun, the everlasting mountains, human nature—all are changing, however subtle and invisible to us be the process. But *relatively*, an immense body of our observations, and nearly half our scientific knowledge, deal with phenomena of apparent stability, order, permanent type. It would be riding to death the old apophthegm of Heracleitus—πάντα ῥεῖ—to think of things only in *flux*, to ignore the vast field of Persistence of Type as dominating change. To those who reject the relativity of knowledge, it may be open to disregard mere relative permanence in a universe of absolute movement. This is not open to those who regard all our knowledge as relative, not absolute, to whom it is wholly based on experience.

For all practical purposes of reasoning, our experience reports a vast substratum of stability; and its laws and its conditions are as essential to all reasoning as the laws of change. It is one of the inherent vices of the objective synthesis, that it has to banish *Statics* from its scheme, and to concentrate its study on *Dynamics* alone. It is the intellectual and moral disease of our time to despise everything that is not in constant *flux*. The Philosophy of Evolution is limited *ex hypothesi* and *ex vi termini* to *dynamical* movements. But it is not true that Science consists

solely of dynamical laws. The laws of Type, of a stability *relative* to human observations, are antecedent in fact, and also in order of thought. Complete philosophy must rest on a theory at once statical and dynamical. A full science of Ethic cannot be constituted by tabulating in a series the changes recorded in moral sentiment, whilst wholly ignoring the permanent instincts of the human heart, the qualities of the human will, the powers of the human intelligence, and the personal, domestic, tribal, and national institutions which cling round man under all conditions of development. In Ethic these types and axiomatic forms are far more dominant, and even more conspicuous, than are the changes and developments. We do not doubt that Ethic is subject to incessant development. But relatively and for real knowledge, the fixed types, even if only apparently fixed, are far more essential to us.

The successors of Spencer have got to face the big problem of the application of the Evolution Philosophy to the entire field of the Inorganic sciences. Spencer himself omitted these altogether on palpably insufficient grounds. Had he boldly attempted to show the relation of his sixteen dogmas to the Physical Sciences, to Astronomy, to Physics with all its corollaries, to Chemistry, and to Mechanics, he must have been confronted with the dilemma—how little any mere theory of Evolution and Dissolution, apart from any theory of invariable Order and Type, would serve to illumine any inorganic science. To the Astronomer, the Solar System may be bodily moving towards the constellation Hercules; the Sun, and the Earth may be cooling; and the orbit of the Planets may be infinitesimally diminishing. But the essential laws are the

almost, or apparently, fixed laws of planetary revolutions. To the physicist, the laws of gravitation, of molecular activity, of electric force, are not in *flux*, or, at least, are not in any serial Evolution, but are statical. To the chemist, evolution of any kind is absorbed in the invariable action of the elements and their compounds. Can Evolution solve any problem of radium or of X-rays?

To me it is a sad thought that the Synthetic Philosophy was never completed by its founder, so as to fill up the enormous *lacuna* left in it by the gap of the whole range of the Inorganic Sciences. It leaps from First Principles, said to apply to the whole range of knowledge, to Biology, Psychology, and Sociology, jumping across this vasty deep of Mathematics, Geometry, Astronomy, Physics, with all its ramifications of Barology, Thermology, Electricity, and the rest. Nor does Chemistry appear at all. Spencer from time to time touches on Astronomy and on Geology, so far as the laws of evolution bear upon the origin of the Solar System, and the formation of the strata of the Earth. But I do not remember a word as to the regular and double movement of our planet, or the solar system viewed as a permanent scheme of invariable Mechanics. But these are of infinitely greater interest, both scientifically and for all human ends, than are hypotheses about the Nebular Universe and its gradual modifications. How the conceptions of Gravitation, of the volumes and combinations of gases, of the transmission of light, of heat, of electric energy, can be reducible to terms of *Change* and *growth*, apart from persistence and invariable action—this is a mystery which at present seems buried with Spencer.

This attempt to reduce the essential laws of every

science to terms of change and movement must have a mischievous effect on subsequent inquiries. It would be ludicrous to limit Astronomy to hypotheses about the origin of the Solar System, and to limit Geology to speculations how the Earth came about, neglecting all notice of the Earth as we find it. It is an attempt to write a new Book of Genesis—based not on Revelation, not on observation of facts, but on unverifiable hypotheses. And all the time the student of Astronomy is left uninstructed as to the Precession of the Equinoxes, and the effect on the Earth of Sun-spots; and the student of Geology is left in the dark as to the extent and disposition of the Coal Measures. We know in this University only too well the consequences of limiting Science to a matter of *Origins*. The student of History, whose views about the French Revolution are quite rudimentary, is full of learning about the Mark System. And the candidate for a degree in Law, who is hazy about the Statute of Frauds or the Wills Acts, is voluble about the Witenagemot and the Laws of Ina.

I pass to another difficulty which the scheme of Universal Evolution presents to many minds. It propounds a single set of laws which claim to be equally applicable to all the sciences, both cosmical and human; and, more than that, it claims to supply us with an adequate but general elucidation of all phenomena in the Universe, on our Earth, and in human nature. At the close of his famous essay, *Reasons for dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte,* pencer challenges Positivists to show that Comte ever held his view, '*that the factors producing changes of all kinds, inorganic and organic, co-operate everywhere throughout the Cosmos in the same general way, and everywhere work meta-*

*morphoses having the same essential traits.*' I venture to think that Positivists would warmly join with Spencer in denying that Comte held any such view, that he countenanced any such conception about the Cosmos or the general sciences. To followers of Comte it would be a fatal blot on any system of philosophy to use any uniform set of laws as an adequate logic of all the sciences in turn—assuming that any single set of principles sufficed to explain and co-ordinate the sciences within each, and co-ordinate one with another.

Comte, on the contrary, emphatically insists that the laws, the methods, and the principles of the different sciences are always different and distinct, practically incommensurable and not interchangeable. He holds that each general science has its own logic, its own generalization. Students of the Positive Philosophy do not need to be reminded that the Synthesis or co-ordination of the sciences, as proposed by Comte, consists, not in applying to them all alike one set of formulae, but in tracing their concatenation and mutual relations. To attempt a co-ordination of the sciences on one uniform theory—such theory primarily applied to the material world—inevitably forces the philosopher to reduce all social and moral problems to the terms of cosmical and physical problems, and ultimately to terms of molecular physics and mechanics. And this in fact is exactly what has happened. The cardinal principles of the Synthetic Philosophy are all formulated in terms that apply to the whole Solar System, and indeed to the original molecular basis of the Universe. If the Universal laws of Evolution and Dissolution and their corollaries—segregation, integration and differentiation —govern and explain the phenomena of the Universe, then social and moral progress has to be explained

in the language of Physics and Mechanics. In the school in which I have been trained this is known as Materialism in the strict sense of that word, which I take to be—reasoning about the soul of man, as if its functions were simply those of material units. This degradation of Science is repudiated, not only by Theology and by Metaphysics, but no less emphatically by Positive Philosophy.

The whole series of the human sciences, Psychology, Language, Art, Sociology, History, Economics, Ethic, and Politic—such branches of Knowledge as treat man otherwise than as an animal—have their special laws, their own logic, their own moral fibre, their own spiritual conclusion, quite incommensurable with the non-human sciences. Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology undoubtedly explain Man as an animal. But they never can explain Man as a loving, sympathetic, social, moral, religious being. This side of Man's nature, the greatest side of his nature, the largest, most dominant, and most sublime fact in all Nature, can only be explained by Social Science, solid Philosophy, true Religion. As the poet saw it in a vision, the last man shall proudly confront in his conscious superiority the waning and unconscious sun. The central and vivifying life-blood of this Social Science, of this Philosophy, of this Religion, must be—not Evolution, or the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous by continuous differentiation and integration—No! It must complete the development of humanity by Faith, Hope, and Love.

To attempt in any single scheme a Key to all the Sciences is as futile as a 'Key to all the Mythologies.' Matter and Thought are irreducible, for neither can be stated in terms of the other. The same is true of the

Organic and the Inorganic worlds, of the Human and the Non-human worlds, of the Physical and the Moral worlds, of the Cosmical and the Social worlds, of the law of Progress and the law of Order. On all sides we are confronted with a series of Antinomies, Dualisms, and irreducible ultimate conceptions. The World and Humanity are not reducible to any common measure. If *objectively*, and *in rerum natura*, the World is everywhere in eternal *flux*; *relatively* and *humanly*, the world of inorganic Nature is in a state of comparative permanence and stability as compared with the organic world. So the Non-human world is relatively in a state of fixity as compared with the Human world and its infinitely complex and subtle laws of progress. The Evolution of Man is infinitely more subtle, more continuous, more important to us than the Evolution of the Physical world. Wonderful as may be the Evolution of the Horse from Eohippus and Hipparion in ten or twenty millions of years, the evolution of Man in ten or twenty centuries is infinitely more marvellous, and is certainly more complex—and perhaps is more useful for us to know. No formula which explains the Evolution of the Horse, and of Man, in terms of the Evolution of the Milky Way and the Nebula of Orion, can be a very fertile organum of thought. It does not advance us much to be furnished with a set of formulas which profess equally to explain the rotation of the earth and the French Revolution, the pressure of the atmosphere and the growth of the moral sense, the Precession of the Equinoxes and the social improvement of women, the indivisibility of molecules and the rise and growth of the Catholic Church. And this law is the perpetual 'transformation from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent hetero-

geneity, through successive differentiation and integration!' That may all be quite true. I hold it to be very largely true, and profoundly suggestive. But it is not definite enough—not specific, not itself sufficiently differentiated. Mill, adopting a phrase of Novalis, called Comte a 'morality-intoxicated man.' Comte might perhaps have looked on Spencer as a man intoxicated with evolution.

It is a singular fact that the Synthetic Philosophy of Evolution contains no history of human civilization in its entirety, as a continuous biography of man. There is not in it, and never was even projected, any Philosophy of general History, the Dynamics in fact of Sociology. In the 'Principles of Sociology' there are a body of acute but miscellaneous observations, and some profound suggestions, as to the origin of institutions, primitive habits, rudimentary groups. But we never get further than glimpses of savage life, the variations in primaeval rites, and the survival of ancient customs. In all Spencer's vast output there is nothing that can be called any theory of general history. What we have is the *embryology* of society. But no science is constituted, if its conclusions are limited to embryology.

Take the rise of the Persian Empire in the East, when pre-historic and most disparate tribes were consolidated into a military tyranny. Is that adequately explained by the law of 'Transformation from an indefinite homogeneity to a definite heterogeneity?' Take the course of the Greek world from Agamemnon to Alexander. Is that a change from homogeneity to heterogeneity? Or take the Roman world from Romulus to Trajan. Was it more homogeneous in the first century of Rome than in the first century A. D.? Was

the civilized world in the ninth century more coherent than it had been in the first century after Christ? Take the rise and development of the Catholic Church, or the history of Christendom from the time of St. Paul to our day. They may be more heterogeneous to-day, but is either more definite, more consistent now? Spencer's laws offer us illuminating flashes of light across that vast waste of troubled waters that we call the history of mankind. But continuous history was to Spencer a sealed book. He so misread such pages as he ever opened that we can hardly wish it had been otherwise.

Over the coffin which held the mortal remains of Herbert Spencer an eloquent friend pronounced a magnificent eulogy. He said, 'All history, all science, all the varying forms of thought and belief, all the institutions of all the stages of man's progress were brought together; and out of this innumerable multitude of data emerged one coherent, luminous, and vitalized conception of the evolution of the world.' It is a noble ideal towards which Spencer toiled with heroic constancy for forty years. It is an ideal which no English philosopher has ever essayed to reach, an ideal towards which Spencer contributed germs of imperishable truth. Would that I could join in the confidence that this mighty Ideal had been achieved! When I reflect on the enormous gaps in the Synthetic System, the absence of any continuous theory of general history, the absence of any systematic treatment, or even of any sketch, of all the Inorganic Sciences—Mechanics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry—I reluctantly am forced to regard the claim, that out of *all history, all science*, Spencer has evolved 'one coherent conception,' as being far beyond the truth. And when I reflect on the claim, that the

one supreme conception of Evolution, with its monotonous, rigid, mechanical dogmas, sufficed to illustrate and even to co-ordinate all phenomena, both cosmical and human, I even begin to doubt if the very basis of the Evolution system were on sound philosophical lines.

Even if this were so, Spencer happily was far too great a philosopher, far too acute and observant of facts, too much saturated with scientific learning of all kinds, to suffer himself to be overweighted and confined by the materialistic dogmas with which he set forth. Though he gave the world no continuous view of general history, he endowed historical research with a series of brilliant elucidations. Though he leapt across the vast chasm of the Inorganic Sciences in his eagerness to come to Life, to Mankind, to Right and Wrong in human conduct, he turned his powerful searchlight upon one science after another, as it swept round the horizon with its rapidly revolving flash. He, who hotly rejected any serial order in the sciences, in practice evolved his own synthesis in regular series; nay, he built up his whole system in the very serial order for which he had condemned a rival philosophy. And, though he sought to base the Philosophy of Evolution on a set of dogmas as purely physical as if they applied to nothing but celestial mechanics, in the end Spencer devoted the whole strength of his great brain and his spiritual sense of justice, honour, and benevolence in the brotherhood of Man, to the supreme science of society and of morality. Never did Philosophy open with aspect more physical. Never did it insist more imperatively on the law of Justice from man to man, on the supreme duty of Altruism.

Over the portal of the Evolution Philosophy I see

engraved these words:—'Throughout the Universe, in general, and in detail, there is an unceasing redistribution of matter and of motion.'

Over the portal of every Synthetic Philosophy which can command the full assent of the ages to come, I can conceive there will be seen some such aphorisms as these:—

'Order is the Foundation—Progress the end.'

'Progress is the development of Order.'

'Live for others.'

'Man becomes more and more religious, as he becomes more wise, more just, more loving.'

And I feel an assurance beyond words that these axioms are more true, lie nearer to the soul of man, and will prove more fit to advance and ennoble our life on earth.

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M·DCCCC·XXII

## L'ÉNÉIDE DE NOS JOURS [1]

BY THE LEADING of a star
Came Aeneas from afar,
Sailing up the promised stream
To the kingdom of his dream.
Dust was that which had been Troy;
Dido's death had murdered joy;
By the blue Sicilian bay
In his grave Anchises lay.
Years had fled, but faithful still
Flashed the star from hill to hill,
Beck'ning to another home,
Hov'ring o'er the site of Rome.
Peace or battle—who should say?—
In the lap of Fortune lay;
Little recked he what befell,
If he bore his burden well.
So the pilgrimage he made
To receive the accolade;
So, the runes of Fate to spell,
He descended into hell.
Knightly sword and steadfast soul—
Only these could gain the goal;
Self might perish,—if the race
Won and wore the pride of place.

Thus the Mantuan said, and thus
Says Aeneas unto us,
Transubstantiating still
Fickle heart and wayward will.

D. A. S.

[1] *Reprinted, by permission, from the* Westminster Gazette.

# SORTES VERGILIANAE

WHEN, in process of time, a community like ours has the misfortune to lose the services of a very learned man, a captain of research,[1] and to enlist in his stead one whose chief claim to consideration, if claim he has, rests upon the fact that the subject he professes has been to him not merely a life-long study but also a life-long inspiration and delight, and that he believes with all his heart in the value of Latin for to-day,—common sense would seem to dictate that the 'transient and embarrassed' recruit in question, on being called up to deliver the lecture which the custom of the country requires from a newcomer, should not attempt to make any fresh contribution to knowledge[2] but try rather to re-read an old message in the light of recent and current events, appeal to some classic whose name has become a household word, some master-spirit of literature, and ask what he stands for in modern life. What is there about his work that will, in Bacon's phrase, 'come home to our own business and bosom'? What ideals does he set before us? What is the secret of his immortality?

Such a master-spirit is Vergil, whom to have known and loved is in itself a liberal education; whose voice—after nineteen centuries—has lost nothing of its ancient resonance and perennial charm; whose poems are still an oracle (for that is of course the meaning of the term *Sortes Vergilianae*) and not only an oracle but a fruitful and inspiring oracle to the community as well as to the individual of to-day.

[1] Dr Postgate.

[2] My paper is under obvious obligations, which I gratefully acknowledge, in particular to two comparatively recent Studies,—*Vergil and Tennyson*, by the President of Magdalen, and *Roma Felix*, by the Reverend Cyril Martindale.

To the genius and the greatness of the spell-binder no testimony is needed. If it were, from among the 'cloud of witnesses' we might be tempted to cite two—Burke for his words and Tennyson for his works and his example. Tennyson, who has himself been styled our English Vergil; who was from first to last a worshipper at the shrine; who in his student-days at Cambridge had to be called to order by his teacher (Whewell the logician was the man, and the scene a lecture-room in Trinity) for reading Vergil 'under the rose,' when his mind should have been concentrated on the charms of the syllogism; and who, fifty or sixty years on, after he had written 'by request of the Mantuans' that Ode to *Roman* Vergil which we all know (or should know) by heart, with its 'ocean-roll of rhythm' and its *confessio fidei:*

'I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
Ever moulded by the lips of man;'

—who, I say, long years afterwards, when he was laid to rest in the Abbey, had placed upon his coffin for his own

'Golden Branch amid the Shadows'

a wreath of laurel from Vergil's grave.

This Tennyson should be one witness and the other should be Burke, of whom it is related that he kept always within reach a well-worn copy of Vergil—of Vergil, not one of the ninety-and-nine translations of Vergil;—Burke with his reminder that 'if ever we should find ourselves disposed not to admire those writers and artists—Vergil and Livy, for instance, Raphael and Michael Angelo—whom all the learned had admired, not to follow our own fancies, but to study them until we know how and what we ought to admire: and if we cannot arrive at this union of admiration with knowledge, rather to believe that we are dull than that the rest of the world has been imposed upon.'

# SORTES VERGILIANAE

Thirty years ago, in the Gallery above the Bodleian at Oxford, was still shewn (I remember) the edition of Vergil in which Charles the First, on his visit to the Library, when persuaded to consult the *Sortes Vergilianae*, opened at that terrible passage in the Fourth *Aeneid*[1] the curse of Dido on Aeneas, which with extraordinary precision rehearsed and foreshadowed the tragedy of his own fate. The loss of his throne, the separation from his children, the death of Strafford, his own lamentable end,—nothing is left out. You remember the lines and the poignant conclusion:

> 'Nec cum se sub leges pacis iniquae
> Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
> Sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.'

Life is so full of strange and startling coincidences that there is no need for us to hold our breath in wonder at the story, or to see in this curious dispensation mysterious testimony to the uncanny power of 'Vergil the sorcerer.' Had the War taught us nothing else, it would at least have taught us once and for all never to forget the hard realities that stand half-concealed and half-revealed behind language—the intimate and indivisible connexion between real literature and real life. 'Literature,' it has been said,[2] 'classical literature, is a rehearsal of the whole drama of life, from the cradle to the grave,' and the adoption from the time of Hadrian[3] onwards, that is to say from the beginning of the second century A.D., of Vergil as an oracle was simply and solely the tribute of the Roman world to the range and power of Vergil's works, which may fairly and without exaggeration be characterized as the pagan Bible.

Ever since the beginning of the Christian era, when from time to time great issues, national or personal, have hung

[1] *Aen.* iv, 615-21.

[2] Mr T. W. Dunn in *The Times Educational Supplement*, March, 1917.

[3] Spartianus, *Hadr. Vita.*

trembling in the balance, quaking hearts have set anxious fingers turning up in the pages of Holy Writ some text to yield in advance foreknowledge and comfort. That Vergil and perhaps Vergil alone besides the Bible should have been chosen for this purpose is after all only a striking recognition and confirmation of the prestige the poet won and held in the times of momentous crisis at which he lived and wrote, an austere figure, the Maiden of Naples—so his contemporaries called him—of whom it might be said as it was of Milton, 'the Lady of Christ's,' that

'His soul was like a star and dwelt apart';

a poet whose early work, the Messianic Eclogue, long ranked with Isaiah as a prophecy, a conscious or unconscious prophecy, of the coming of Christ, repeated later in the 'unto *us*' of the Hercules myth in *Aeneid* VIII,[1]

'Attulit et nobis aliquando optantibus aetas
Auxilium adventumque dei';

whose epic, the *Aeneid*, was anticipated by Propertius, spokesman of Rome, in the memorable phrase, 'Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade'—'a greater than Homer is here'; whose fame as the Evangelist or the Shakespeare of Italy was by the year 79 A.D. so well established not only among the intellectuals, 'the Princes of Parnassus,' but among the rank and file of citizens also, that while Statius[2] speaks of him in language of the same devout homage that in later days Milton was to dedicate to the memory of Shakespeare, it was in a half-line of Vergil scratched incomplete upon the wall at his side, that as the shadow and the silence of death descended, in the great eruption of Vesuvius, on Herculaneum and Pompeii, the Roman sentry, dying at his post, took leave of the world.

Much, but not too much, has been written and said about the 'natural magic' of Vergil's half-lines, those tiny 'jets' of

[1] *Aen.* viii, 200 f.

[2] *Theb.* xii, 816 *sq.*; *Silv.* iv, 4, 53 ff., 7, 25; v, 3, 214.

incomparable speech in which, ever and anon, he gives utterance to the great thoughts, the 'eternal verities' with which we tend to associate his work; 'his single words and phrases, his pathetic half-lines, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness, giving utterance as the voice of Nature herself to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things which is the experience of her children in every time.'[1] *Sic vos non vobis*—of the self-sacrifice in nature; *stat sua cuique dies*—'each hath his day appointed, each his deed'; *dis aliter visum*—'God's ways are not as our ways'; *unum pro multis dabitur caput*—'one life in atonement for many.' Some will remember how Mrs Humphry Ward[2] has analysed one of these half-lines, the famous *sunt lacrimae rerum*, the pity that Aeneas found at Carthage for Priam and 'the tale of Troy Divine'; how she shows the 'universality' of the thought, arguing that the tears are tears 'not so much for' [Priam] 'as for all griefs!—for this duped, tortured, struggling life of ours—for the *mortalia*' (what our liturgy calls 'the changes and chances of this mortal life') 'which grip all hearts, which none escape—pain and separation and remorse, hopes deceived, and promise mocked, decadence in ourselves, change in others and that iron gentleness of death which closes all.'

Much has been written on these 'iacula prudentium' from what I would venture to call the Vergilian Breviary; but perhaps nothing is more significant than the fact that time and again they have been chosen as the *tesserae*, the watchwords, the mottoes of great schools and great institutions.

> 'One brief hour may yet inspire an aeon,
> One great thought may still cement an host.'

Apart from the 'Lest we forget' of Liverpool's 'Deus nobis haec otia fecit,' there is the motto of Harrow, 'Stet Fortuna

[1] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*. The passage cannot be repeated or reproduced too often.

[2] *Fenwick's Career*, cap. x *init*. Marie Antoinette stands for Priam in her context.

Domus!' The prosperity of the House—may it always be our bulwark! The motto of the Clan Macmillan, 'Miseris succurrere disco,' My task—the succour of the oppressed.[1] The motto of the old Bath College, 'Possunt, quia posse videntur.' They can,—because they think they can. The motto of Clifton College, Earl Haig's old school—'Spiritus intus alit,' 'the soul of the place—the life-blood of us all.' The creative word—the master phrase—the soul of a community. 'C'est l'âme qui gagne la bataille,' writes Marshal Foch. If he is right (and surely he is), how many battles has not Vergil won!

These four instances taken at random may serve to clinch the point. More recent and perhaps more striking is the recognition in the name and style of our national Order of Merit—one of the proudest tributes the nation has to bestow for service and self-sacrifice—the recognition I say of the master mind of Vergil, who in a central saying in the *Aeneid* bestows the palm in Elysium on those souls who by service, by Merit (English has borrowed even the word), have earned renown and made men 'keep their memory green':

'Quique sui memores aliquos fecere *merendo*.'[2]

Striking *sortes* or oracles in the strict sense of the word might easily be multiplied from many sources. The speaker would prefer to give two or three from his own personal experience.—In August 1914, in the week of the German rush for Paris, when von Kluck was trying desperately to 'hack his way through'; when day by day in the *Times*' diagram the black line of the hostile advance was slipping nearer and nearer to its objective; when all were anxious and in some quarters it was thought that the fall of Paris was only a matter of days;—a scholar turned, not unnaturally, to his Vergil for light. What said the Oracle? The *sors* was from the Sixth *Aeneid*, and the words ran thus:

[1] Edgar's phrase in *Lear*—'Pregnant to good pity.'

[2] *Aen.* vi, 664.

'Quos super atra silex iam iam lapsura cadentique
Imminet assimilis. Lucent genialibus altis
Aurea fulcra toris epulaeque ante ora paratae
Regifico luxu'

(There you have the lure—and the menace. Then the *sors* and consolation)

'*Furiarum maxima iuxta*
*Accubat et manibus prohibet contingere mensas.*'[1]

The Queen of the Avengers keeps guard between. Her hand thrusts away the spoiler from the feast. What modern pen could have portrayed with the same terseness and power that tremendous and heart-shaking crisis? That the words turned up at random thus are a reminiscence or echo of the passage in Pindar,[2]

ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς
γε Τὰντάλου λίθον παρά τις ἔτρεψεν ἄμμι θεός,
ἀτόλματον Ἑλλάδι μόχθον,

which compares the Persian invasion of Greece to the stone of Tantalus,—ever threatening avalanche-like to fall but never quite 'crashing' or crushing its objective—seems on reflection only to give further pregnancy and point to the *sors Vergiliana*.

A year passed and one atom, a 'classical' atom, 'in the sounding labour-house vast' of a London vexed and harassed with the unsolicited attentions, nightly renewed, of the ubiquitous and objectionable Zeppelin, turned yet again to Vergil for comfort. And pat fell not the bomb but the anodyne. The *sors* was from *Aeneid* IX, the description of the the wolf, 'the prowling wolf,'—so Milton[3],—

[1] *Aen.* vi, 602-606. The opening words recall Tennyson's *Revenge:* 'But while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud, Whence the thunderbolt shall fall long and loud': and the last two verses are staged by Shakespeare in the *Tempest*, Act iii, scene 3.

[2] *Isthmian Odes*, vii (viii), 9 ff. 'Inasmuch as some God hath put away from us the Tantalos-stone that hung above our heads, a curse intolerable to Hellas.'—Ernest Myers. [3] *P.L.*, iv, 183 ff.

'Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
In hurdled cotes amid the field secure' . . .

Yes, but whereas Milton's wolf

'Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold,'

in Vergil[1] the beast would prey but the flock 'take covert' and the raider is foiled.

'Ac veluti pleno lupus insidiatus ovili
Cum fremit ad caulas, ventos perpessus et imbris,
Nocte super media, tuti sub matribus agni
Balatum exercent: ille asper et improbus ira
SÆVIT IN ABSENTIS'—

'*sævit in absentis!*' voids his spleen (his 'frightfulness') in vain on a foe beyond his reach . . .

'Poets that lasting marble seek
Must carve in Latin or in Greek' . . .

Ransack all literature and will you find in any language another three words to sum up so vividly and completely the Zeppelin offensive, its character and its result?

Curiously apt was a third *sors* on the attempt to force the Dardanelles, a line from *Aeneid* IX[2] with the neighbouring reference to the four 'capital ships' Aeneas lost, the set-back to his hopes and the joyless reflection: 'Hic primum Fortuna fidem mutata novavit'; and a fourth on the Czar and the Revolution in Russia, the lines on the fall of Priam in *Aeneid* II.[3]

'Iacet ingens litore truncus
Avolsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus':

'But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence';

[1] *Aen.* ix, 59 *sq.*
[2] *Aen.* v, 604 and 639. [3] *Aen.* ii, 557f.

and the late yet fateful assurance, in 1918, of the collapse of Bulgaria and the beginning of the end:

'Via prima salutis
(Quod minime reris) Graia pandetur ab urbe,'[1]

the highroad to safety, the gate to peace, little though you think it, an enemy city shall first unbar.

But the War had begun on a Vergilian note, with a *sors Vergiliana* spontaneously chosen and taken up with a zest by the nation as a whole. Who does not remember the burden of the song with which the light-hearted Incorrigibles embarked on the quest?

'It's a long, long way to Tipperary:
It's a long way to go.'

And what Latinist who loves his Vergil did not recognise on the instant an almost word-for-word translation of the counsel given by Helenus[2] to Aeneas when he thought, 'good easy man,' he too at the beginning of his great war, that on the threshold of the adventure stood success?

'Principio Italiam
[Italy, Hesperia, the Westland was his Tipperary]
quam tu *iam* rere propinquam
(Vicinosque, ignare, paras invadere portus)
LONGA PROCVL LONGIS VIA DIVIDIT INVIA TERRIS';

'Tipperary' or 'Paradise Won' (some may stumble at the word but 'Paradise' it is, and Paradise not lost, but won). That is the burden of the Aeneid. All life is to Vergil a quest, an adventure, a crusade; a struggle against odds and a hard struggle: but a struggle worth winning. What has he to tell us of the quest? What of its aim and its significance? Why are these *sortes Vergilianae* not a 'back number' but a 'live wire,' 'a priceless asset'?

The answer is to be sought and found in Vergil's Life and Times, as interpreted and embodied in his poetry; in the parallel between those days and these.

[1] *Aen.* vi, 96 f. [2] *Aen.* iii, 381 ff.

# SORTES VERGILIANAE

Matthew Arnold, whom, no less than his brother-in-arms, Arthur Hugh Clough, we may fairly claim as a Liverpool poet, a Vergilian through-and-through, whose *Rugby Chapel* is an Anglo-Saxon *Aeneid* in epitome—Matthew Arnold once said, we are told, that his poems were 'a cry of pain.' Mrs Sellar in her *Reminiscences* relates that Burns wrote his great song of liberty, 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' in a fierce thunderstorm battling with the tempest on the road to Newton-Stewart, near Loch Ken. So, too, Vergil's music was wrung from him by a storm, a storm not of Nature but of State. It is a common-place of the text books that 'Poetry is a criticism and an interpretation of life,' not of Greek life or of Roman life or of English life, but of life—the life of the race; and not for one generation only but for all time (that is what they mean when they call the Classics the Humanities). If we may add that each poet who matters and Vergil among the rest brings something of his own into the common stock, we might make bold to say that Vergil's special contribution to the ἔρανος is a robust idealism. His theme is the service of man. His ideal is success, cost what it may, in that service. Of the two lines[1] in which, according to tradition, Vergil 'unlocked his heart,' one is the *sors* which Apollo by the mouth of the Sibyl gives to Aeneas (and through Aeneas to Rome *and to us*) in the temple of Cumae at the climax of his pilgrimage: 'Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito!' 'Do not you go down before misfortune! the harder Fate hits, the more daring be your onset!' That is the mainspring of his story and his ethics. Iron endurance—indomitable pluck. It is one of Lord Fisher's three 'nevers' (Never argue. Never apologise. *Never give in*). It is the 'Vaincre. Vaincre—n'importe à quel prix. Vaincre, non pour dominer mais pour être libre' of that redoubtable Vergilian, Marshal Foch, tempered all through by a 'passion for perfection'—the 'divine despair' or divine discontent, that is for ever (like the souls in the underworld

[1] *Aen.* v, 710; vi, 95.

whom Aeneas saw waiting and wearying for their entry into rest) stretching out hands of passionate longing for the further shore: 'Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.'[1] That is the pith and marrow of Vergil's teaching to the New Age; his rule for Peace as well as for War, for all life and for every man. It is the *sors Vergiliana* par excellence. It is the Pauline note, ἐπεκτεινόμενος. It explains the beautiful old legend how Saint Paul on his way to Rome touched at Naples and when told Vergil's story and taken to see Vergil's grave recognized in the poet a kindred spirit and wept that he had come too late to baptize him as a convert to the true religion.

More than most men, Vergil in his generation had 'learnt in suffering what he taught in song.' His world was the world that immediately preceded the Christian era; a world groaning and travailing with a new birth; faint from the period of gestation; sick with long years of war at home and abroad; fresh from the fight for existence against Antony and the East; out of which—the last Act in the great drama of the Republic—was to emerge, so men thought, a colossal transformation scene. The cycle of war and tribulation was over. The cycle of peace and progress was to come.

> 'The world's great age begins anew.
> The golden years return.'

The air was on fire with talk of a Deliverer, and that promised Deliverer none other than the Victor of Actium, the Saviour of Rome, the young Augustus.

> 'Hic vir, hic est tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
> Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
> Saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
> Saturno quondam'...[2]

And here comes in a personal touch; for, unless recent speculation and research are at fault, this Deliverer was not

[1] *Aen.* vi, 314. [2] *Aen.* vi, 791 ff.

only (as we knew before) the friend but the old friend—almost the 'school friend'—of the poet.[1]

Vergil's childhood, boyhood and youth had felt the stress and the strain. His manhood caught up and passed on the new hope, the 'Sibylline' promise that here at last was the 'peace, unity and concord' prophesied by the seers of the past. To him, however, it is to be a spiritual regeneration; it is less the surroundings than the men who are to be transfigured; and so instead of propounding his faith in terms of politics and fact, he wraps truth in fiction[2] to spread as a legend and a vision through the medium of his poetry.

The blossoms of the *Eclogues*, his first garland of song, are grouped round one poem, the immortal rose of childhood, the Messianic Eclogue, the central figure of which is the figure of a new-born babe, a laughing babe, brought to the birth by the travail of the whole world, and destined to lead that world on into the land of promise. The message is transmitted in a language and a similitude that must strike home to every heart.

In the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, the achievements of his prime,—at their face value no more than a treatise on farming and a conventional epic,—he sings *first* the Reconstruction of Italy, the old agricultural Italy, 'Saturnian' Italy—in its connotation not unlike the 'merrie' England of the Elizabethans—and *then* the re-birth and re-constitution of the State—*ex Troia Roma;* 'Ilion falling, Rome arising.' In the Fourth *Georgic* (his 'fable of the Bees') the community, in the *Aeneid* the individual, the good citizen personified, the 'Unknown Warrior,' is the hero of the piece. It is an epic of 'God's best gift to man'—an epic of the Day's Work.

Not for nothing is HONVS, the old Latin word for 'burden,' so closely bound up with HONOS, the Latin word for 'honour,' 'preferment,' that Latin writers play on the

[1] Class. Rev. 18, 119-122. Note on the Culex by Dr Warde Fowler, with a P.S. by 'R.S.C.'

[2] 'Obscuris vera involvens.'—*Aen.* vi, init.

resemblance, in the spirit of the modern motto, *Onerari est honorari*.[1] On Rome's oldest and most cherished monuments of the past, the Tombs of the Scipios, we read the record only of offices served and burdens borne:—'Consol, censor, aedilis hic fuit apud vos.' No vain flourish of rhetoric there; only the facts,—'facta non verba.' 'L'homme c'est rien—l'œuvre c'est tout.'

The Pilgrim whose Progress is recounted in the *Aeneid*, the 'traveller between life and death' whose career is held up to all as a pattern and an example, bearing on his shoulders —not in a mere metaphor, for the prophetic story is outlined on his shield—the doom and destiny of his descendants: 'Attollens umero famamque et fata nepotum'[2]—is nominally Aeneas, but, just as England, in the words of the old criticism, is the heroine of the historical plays of Shakespeare, so, it has been said, 'the hero of the *Aeneid* is Rome,' *Roma aeterna*, the daughter of Troy and heir to Troy's great record, with roots striking deep into the past and branches reaching out far into the future. The soul of Troy survives in Aeneas and his company. 'I am sure I can save this country, and nobody else can,' said Pitt at a crisis of the Napoleonic Wars,—*potest,—quia posse videtur*. And similarly Aeneas—'data fata secutus'[3]—secure in the star of his house, the halo that while Troy was burning hovered over the head of his son Ascanius —Aeneas, listening to the voice of promise as Joan of Arc (*Saint* Joan) to her 'voices,' sets out on his pilgrimage, an austere pilgrimage,

'To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield,'

a conscript, and a conscript for life, but with faith in his mission and in himself; a Hamlet, but a Hamlet not unequal to his task. And in this spirit of complete self-subordination, to heaven, to country and to family, he finds if not happiness

[1] cf. *e.g.* Liv. xxii, 30, 'Plebiscitum, quo oneratus magis quam honoratus sum, primus antiquo abrogoque.'

[2] *Aen.* viii, 731. [3] *Aen.* i, 382.

at least content. His philosophy is the philosophy of Horace and of Hastings, 'a mind that, happen what may, never loses poise or balance'—'Mens aequa in arduis.' Like Richard the Second in the play he says in effect

'I am sworn brother, sweet,
To grim necessity'
'Italiam non sponte sequor.'

Here is no epic of Free-Will. The call is on him—he can no other—to follow up, to push his stone, to turn his wheel, but *not* like Sisyphus and Ixion in vain. He is a type and a model for Rome and for Augustus in the days of Reconstruction:

'[His] shoulders held the sky suspended;
[He] stood, and [Troy's] foundations stay.'

You remember the great prologue: how he came, 'Fate's refugee,' to Italy and the Lavinian fields, after sore buffeting at the decree of Heaven, from years of suffering on sea and land, in peace and war—

'dum conderet urbem
Inferretque deos Latio'

—so he might but found his city and bring the worship of his gods to Latium. Yes, and he achieved the task. A super-Orpheus, he never looked back.

This idea of the service of man—'many men through many years each working in his own country'—the theme of the *Aeneid*, the call of the Race, is as old as humanity itself. It is the Labours of Hercules the Pathfinder. It is the Agony of Prometheus the Martyr—matched, each of them, against the enemy of man and of human progress in that duel, that eternal duel, between the forces of Good and Evil, which began in the Garden of Eden and will end only with the Last Trump. It is an Act, and an essential Act, in the Tragedy of Evolution. The Juno of the *Aeneid* is the Zeus of the *Prometheus Vinctus* and the Hera of the Hercules myth. Prometheus and Hercules come alive in Aeneas of Troy, who

like them dares the great ordeal and goes down, quick, into the Underworld, to help and to redeem the people of whom he is the shepherd. 'It was for the people'—says the hero of 'The Knife and the Naked Chalk'—'the sheep are the people.' ... 'It was not right that The Beast should master man. *What else could I have done?*' But this time the story is re-told in the image of man as a unit, a loyal unit, in a typical family (and the family was itself the unit of Roman life throughout Rome's history) in migration and transition from Troy of the past, which typifies, dimly, the old régime broken up and abandoned after Actium, the 'great war' of the day, to Rome of the present and the future, *Roma aeterna*, to Rome and Italy, the land of promise ('debita tellus'), which the Pilgrims had set out to seek and which the new era is to see inaugurated,—the State which it is the destiny of Aeneas, a shadowy Augustus, to found and enthrone as queen of the world; the goal of the adventure, the ark of civilization; to be handed down by dint of Tennyson's

> 'Something higher, something nobler, all for each
> and each for all,'

secure from generation to generation, like the Luck of the House in the Commonwealth of the Bees:

> 'Ergo *ipsas* quamvis angusti terminus aevi
> Excipiat (neque enim plus septima ducitur aestas),
> At *genus* immortale manet, multosque per annos
> Stat Fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum';[1]

> 'Therefore, though each a life of narrow span,
> Ne'er stretched to summers more than seven, befalls,
> Yet deathless doth the race endure, and still
> Perennial stands the fortune of their line,
> From grandsire unto grandsire backward told';[2]

[1] *G.* iv, 206-209, perhaps the finest lines in a magnificent passage (149-228), which yet deserves the closest study as a whole.

[2] Mr James Rhoades.

'For so the ark be brought to Zion, who
Heeds how they perished or were paid, who bore it?
For so the shrine abide, what shame—what pride—
If [they] the priests, were bound or crowned before it?'[1]

Vergil's religion, if we are to take his own word or indication for it, is the religion of Pythagoras, with the old belief in the cycle of time, which at every turn of the wheel brings back to earth fresh souls from the past, to carry on the government and advancement of the race, 'souls ascending and descending the ladder' according as they do well or ill from generation to generation, 'the men who help and the men who hinder,' some mounting from strength to strength, others dropping ever downwards, lower and lower, if they fail themselves and their country. 'Just and sure is the wheel, swerving not a hair': the struggle is always against odds, always failing of complete success, and yet, as often, desperately and perforce renewed, with the old ideal still to lead us 'on, and always on.' Here is an ἔρανος, a love-feast, to which each feeblest member of the community brings, in the spirit of Aeneas and of the Bees, his particle of service and self-sacrifice, struggling on, 'faint yet pursuing,' 'n'importe à quel prix,' 'non sibi sed toti,' towards the common goal.

What but struggle is the heart of the allegory and of life? What else was the hall-mark of Rome?

'Sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.'[2]

Clearly to Vergil, as to Marcus Aurelius, 'life was more of a wrestling match than a dance.' The farmer and his bulls on the land, pitted against nature and the powers of nature. The bees in the hive contending against drones and vampires. Aeneas and his men on pilgrimage to found their city in defiance of Juno and her Acheron;[3] and for each his *sors*

[1] Mr Kipling, 'The Proconsuls'; *Times*, 22 July 1905.
[2] *G.* ii, 533 f. [3] *Aen.* vii, 311.

in that vital and essential co-operation, which Vergil is out to preach and to promote. 'Toil,' he says, 'unconscionable toil,'[1] is the real world-conqueror. It needs sho-tage and stress to speed up the machine:

'Labor omnia vincit
Improbus et duris urgens in rebus egestas.'

And again

'*Depresso* incipiat iam tum mihi taurus aratro
*Ingemere*, et sulco attritus splendescere vomer.'[2]

'The ox is yoked and he must plough,' as Napoleon told his doctors when they ordered him a 'rest-cure' on campaign. Yes, plough (says Vergil) till the plough-share shines like silver in the furrow. To Aeneas it is the 'follow up!' of the Harrow song:

'Perge modo et, qua te ducit via, dirige gressum.'[3]
'Vade age et ingentem FACTIS fer ad æthera Troiam;'[4]

and, in an aside, by the way, for the 'idle rich' and the 'ca' canny' labourer is the pillory and the stocks of their *sors* also. They are the 'barren darnel' and the 'wild oats' that spring up in the fields untilled and lord it, play the tyrant, domineer over the realms of golden opportunity:

'Interque nitentia culta
*Infelix* lolium et *steriles dominantur* avenae.'

The chief praise is to the Bees in his 'Fable of the Bees,' who always (he tells us) rise to the height of a great emergency, and when the need is sternest and the community hardest hit by loss and devastation 'toil, and toil terribly,' with cumulative effort and collective conscience—with the 'diversity of gifts' and the 'unity of spirit' which our Navy League after their example has taken for its motto—'toil, and toil terribly,' till the loss is made good:

'Quo magis exhaustae fuerint, hoc acrius *omnes*
Incumbent generis lapsi sarcire ruinas,
Complebuntque foros et floribus horrea texent.'[5]

[1] 'wicked' toil. *G.* i, 145 f. [2] *G.* i, 145. [3] *Aen.* i, 401.
[4] *Aen.* iii, 461. [5] *G.* iv, 140 ff.

'The more impoverished they, the keenlier all
To mend the fallen fortunes of their race,
Will nerve them, fill the cells up, tier on tier,
And weave their granaries from the rifled flowers.'[1]

No 'ca' canny,' no 'sinn fein' there; all are to 'get busy' and do their duty, not for themselves alone but for the race. For life, the poet reminds us, never stands still. It is like a river, on which we are all compelled to row; a river with a fierce current, that it taxes every muscle to master. Delay and interruption spell ruin and disaster:

'Sic omnia fatis
In peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,
Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit
Atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni.'[2]

'Never will [man] be his own master, nor yet ever any man's. He will get half he gives, and give twice what he gets, till his life's last breath; and if he lays aside his load before he draws that last breath, all his work will go for naught.'[3] There, in the words of a great modern writer, is life according to Vergil; and there, surely, is an 'oracle' for to-day.

The ideas and qualities which Vergil throws upon the screen in the shifting pageant of his great epic are elemental ideas and qualities, the things that matter in the life of the individual and of the community—continuity, courage, patriotism, persistency, tradition; the splendid heroism and self-sacrifice of youth, of a Pallas, a Lausus, a Euryalus; the iron determination and inflexible principles of manhood and age, of an Aeneas, a Tarchon, an Evander. He is too wise to pretend that the yearnings and aspirations he conjures up can ever find their full fruition here and now.

That passion which possesses only the great masters of Art and of Science, the passion for perfection, which led Vergil

[1] Mr James Rhoades. [2] *G.* i, 199 ff.
[3] Mr Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies.*

himself as he lay dying to bid his friends burn the *Aeneid*, and Lord Kelvin, a kindred spirit, at the end of his career to characterize his own life-work as failure,[1] that passion glows and vibrates in the characters as well as in the harmonies of the poem:

> 'Aut pugnam aut aliquid iamdudum invadere magnum,
> Mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est.'[2]

But if hope inspired the Fourth *Eclogue* with its anticipation of the 'Madonna and Child' of Raphael and his great contemporaries, with all that symbolism of dawn and spring, a re-incarnation, a new age,

> 'The soul that rises with us, our life's star,'

yet the *Aeneid* ends with the passing of a heroic soul, a rebel soul it is true but a heroic soul, still aspiring, still unsatisfied, with a sigh, *cum gemitu*, to the hereafter:

> 'And with a moan his spirit passed, disdainful, to the shades':[3]

ends with the admission that for Everyman the quest *is* (and must be) the reward.

The triumph of Aeneas is for the moment eclipsed by the tragedy of Turnus. 'It isn't life that matters,' he seems to say, with Age and Experience, in Mr Walpole's *Fortitude*, 'it is the courage that you bring to it.' Throughout we are struggling on towards a goal that eludes and must elude us still; 'fugientis prendimus oras Italiae'; a radiance, an ideal;

[1] 'One word characterises the most strenuous of the efforts for the advancement of science that I have made perseveringly for fifty-five years: that word is failure. I know no more of electric and magnetic force, or of the relation between ether, electricity and ponderable matter, or of chemical affinity, than I knew or tried to teach my class-students in my first session as Professor.'

*Lord Kelvin at his Jubilee (Glasgow*, 1896).

[2] *Aen.* ix, 186 f.

[3] *Aen.* xii, 951; the translation is Mr Garrod's.

'The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream;'

'Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
Tendimus in Latium';—

'On, to the bound of the waste,
On to the City of God.'

That in feeble outline is the teaching of Vergil; what Mr H. G. Wells and the author of *Erewhon* contemptuously dismiss, the one as 'Tennysonianism' and the other as 'mere Rococo,' but what led Bacon to describe Vergil as 'the chastest poet and the royalest that to the memory of man is known,' and the elder Scaliger, as cited by Sir Philip Sidney, to declare that 'no Philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil.' 'Great words in the memory furnish' (it has been said) 'one of the best hopes for great aspirations in life.' Happy the man who goes through life with *sortes Vergilianae* ringing in his mind, eternal verities in immortal verse. They will be to him so many talismans against the deadly and devastating materialism, which seems to be settling, like a blight, on the world of to-day.

Many will recall a passage of Robert Louis Stevenson in the first chapter of *The Ebb Tide*, the passage about Robert Herrick the beach-comber and his 'tattered Vergil.' 'Certainly,' writes Stevenson, 'if money could have been raised upon the book, Robert Herrick would long ago have sacrificed that last possession; but the demand for literature which is so marked a feature in some parts of the South Seas, extends not so far as the dead tongues, and the Vergil which he could not exchange against a meal had often consoled him in his hunger. He would study it, as he lay with tightened belt on the floor of the old calaboose, seeking favourite passages and finding new ones only less beautiful because they lacked the consecration of remembrance. Or he would pause on

[1] *Aen.* i, 204 f.

random country walks, sit on the path-side, gazing over the sea on the mountains of Eimeo, and dip into the *Aeneid* seeking *sortes*. And if the oracle (as is the way with oracles) replied with no very certain nor encouraging voice, visions of England at least would throng upon the exile's memory: the busy schoolroom, the green playing fields, holidays at home, and the perennial roar of London, and the fireside and the white head of his father. For it is the destiny of those grave, restrained and classic writers, with whom we make enforced and often painful acquaintanceship at school, to pass into the blood and become native in the memory; so that a phrase of Vergil speaks not so much of Mantua or Augustus, but of English places and the student's own irrevocable youth.'[1]

Many hues are blended to make up this rainbow fascination—grit, faith, earnestness, loyalty, discipline, the spirit and the star of Rome, embodied long before Vergil's time in the work of his spiritual progenitor, the fighting poet Ennius, with his unconquerable soul; the

'Qui vicit, non est victor nisi victu' fatetur'

of the struggle against Hannibal, and the

'Quae neque Dardaniis campis potuere perire,
Nec cum capta capi nec cum combusta cremari'

which spells the passing of Troy—the coming of Rome.

But the predominating idea is the continuity of service, the call of the race. The individual dies, but the state, of which he is just as much a part as his soul (according to Vergil and the Stoics) is an atom or element in the great world-soul, the *Anima mundi*—the state persists,

'Moribus antiquis stat Res Romana virisque.'

The valour of the past—the mainstay of the present.

'Serit arbores quae alteri saeclo prosint,' wrote the old

[1]Mr Sidney Irwin in his *Clifton College Addresses* has already cited the words in this connexion, but they will bear repetition: δὶς καὶ τρὶς τὰ καλά!

poet, and out of the phrase springs Vergil's memorable adaptation,

INSERE DAPHNI PIROS CARPENT TVA POMA NEPOTES [1]

'Graft, friend, the fruit tree on the wild, your sons' sons then will eat fruit of your giving.' That is the call—that is the clue.

'Westward Ho!' is the slogan of the *Aeneid*,[2] and the spirit of Vergil seems still to be 'stepping westward.' (1) It was an American—Walt Whitman—who was the first modern poet to take (like Vergil) as the central spring and inspiration of his poetry the glory and praise of the day's work. It is an American who in *The American Era* returns, in prose, to the same theme to-day. Here is a characteristic extract. 'Working is living,' writes Mr Powers, 'just as much as play. To a man who is half a man it is a great deal more so. I know work in all its main varieties, and I know that it is God's best gift to man. No one could rob me so grievously as he who took away my work. No punishment would be so horrible to me as to compel me to spend my time seeking amusement;' and so on to the same effect. That is Aeneas all over. (2) And only last Saturday in *The Spectator*,[3] heralded by a fanfare of editorial trumpets, appeared an ecstatic paean or song for American children by the American poet, Mr Vachel Lindsay,—whose visit to Liverpool last winter is still fresh in our memory,—a song to the *Daphnis* of America, 'Johnny Appleseed,' the Pioneer, who in the van of the migration over the Appalachians westward 'in the twenties, thirties and forties of last century' went—'a sort of Rowland of the Wild West,' says *The Spectator*—as if in literal obedience to the call of Vergil, 'singing his songs and planting his apple-orchards, that those who followed him might enjoy the kindly fruits of the earth in due season.' No one who cares to see how a *sors Vergiliana* may germinate and fructify should miss this

[1] *Ecl.* ix, 50. [2] *Aen.* ii, 781 *alibi*.
[3] No. 4,847, pp. 651 f. 21, May 1921; *q.v.*

remarkable poem. America has ways of her own in poetry as in life: but, we all know, she 'gets there'; she 'delivers the goods'! Here are a few lines to show how Mr Lindsay brings out the symbolism of the fruit. The apple-harvest has come.

> ... 'An angel in each apple,
> Great high-schools in each apple,
> Great colleges in each apple,
> American farms in each apple,
> A state-capital in each apple
> That touched the forest-mould,
> Like scrolls and like bolts of silk
> He saw the fruits unfold,
> And the boughs bent down with their alchemy.'

Old standards in new latitudes:—so the great crusade goes forward. And the crusader never dies; the life-work of the man is moulded by some mysterious alchemy into the fabric of the community. His spirit becomes incorporate in the spirit of the race. So too, as in the teaching of Pythagoras and the folk-lore of many nations, the very soul, it may be, or souls of the past, the hero or the band of heroes (an Arthur or a Romulus; the great Twin Brethren at the Battle of Lake Regillus; the men of Agincourt in the Retreat from Mons) stream back at the appointed time from exile and purgation across the River of Lethe into the to-day—is it in real presence or by the spiritual standard they have set?—to the rescue of their sons' sons in the hour of need.

> 'They come transfigured back
> Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,
> Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
> Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation.'

*Stat Fortuna domus;*—the soul of the Nation, the communion of citizens, the spirit of the people, to which all contribute for good or for evil, infinitesimally and yet appreciably, one and all. The heirloom this and the crown of service, the *Roma Dea*, the *Fortuna Urbis;* national character,

national tradition, national enthusiasm; a power to move mountains and belonging to all; a great flood to which each puniest wavelet adds nevertheless despite its weakness a momentum of its own;

'For though the tired waves vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back through creeks and inlets making
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.'

Behind the great leader, the

'Troïus Aeneas pietate insignis et armis,'[1]
[Aeneas] 'both for piety renowned
And puissant deeds,'[2]

stand arrayed the Unknown Warriors, the

'Multi praeterea quos fama obscura recondit;'[3]

'Not the great nor well-bespoke,
But the mere uncounted folk,
Of whose life and death is none,
Report or lamentation';

linked and bound, each to each, by good work and good will, together into one irresistible fellowship of heart and hand, self-sacrifice and mutual service, running, like the tide, a disciplined course, year in year out, from generation to generation, under the lodestar of a great ideal:

TENDEBANTQVE MANVS RIPAE VLTERIORIS AMORE.

When Odysseus in his wanderings holds converse with the dead in the underworld, among the souls of the men 'killed in action' before Troy, he sees (you remember) the soul of the great Achilles, sick at heart from durance below and eager to exchange his sceptre in the shades for the sickle or the spade of a day-labourer on earth. What is his consolation? He asks for tidings of the New Age, for tidings of his son: and when Odysseus tells him that Neoptolemus has

[1] *Aen.* vi, 403. [2] Milton, *P.L.* xii, 321. [3] *Aen.* v, 302.

played the man and has done his day's work well, he is comforted. There you have the Vergilian cry, the watchword of Age to Age:—'Carry on!' 'Speak to the people of Israel that they go forward,' 'on and always on!' so that the souls of the men 'over there' (as the Greeks put it), the men to whom we owe life and liberty, as they lie in the domes of silence, may hear presently the watchman's cry, 'All's well with the race,' and knowing that their sacrifice has not been in vain, may move like the shade of the great Achilles, rejoicing down the meadow of asphodel:

> ὡς ἐφάμην, ψυχὴ δὲ ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο
> φοίτα μακρὰ βιβᾶσα κατ' ἀσφόδελον λειμῶνα
> γηθοσύνη, ὅ οἱ υἱὸν ἔφην ἀριδείκετον εἶναι.[1]

[1] *Odyssey*, xi, 538 ff.

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# FIFTH EARL GREY MEMORIAL LECTURE

KING'S HALL, ARMSTRONG COLLEGE

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

*FEBRUARY* 3, 1923

BY

VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON

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# SOME THOUGHTS ON PUBLIC LIFE

It is an honour to be asked to give one of this series of memorial lectures, because of the intellectual calibre and attainments of those who have given the preceding lectures, and also because the lectures are given in memory of one whose name is held in respect by all who knew him, and in affection as well as respect to a peculiar degree by those who were intimately associated with him. But I have two disqualifications for giving one of these lectures, and it is with some hesitation that I have accepted the task. One disqualification is that these lectures have hitherto been written documents, which have been read and afterwards printed. My own impaired sight makes it impossible for me to read a lecture. I have therefore no manuscript, and what I shall say must necessarily be of that rough and comparatively ill-ordered nature which pertains to a speech, rather than to a considered and polished lecture. The other shortcoming on my part is that I have not (as the distinguished man, Sir William Bragg, who addressed you last year) sufficient mastery of any particular subject to be able to call myself an authority on that subject. I am going, therefore, to offer you some general reflections which have occurred to me as the result of many years of public life. They will not be exhaustive or profound, but perhaps some of them may be suggestive and useful in stimulating thought on the problems of the present day.

To begin with, I would look back to the time when I first entered public life, not in order that I may praise the 'good old times' or suggest that we should go

back to them, but because a good many people have considerable difficulty at present in knowing exactly where we are. And one way to help in ascertaining where we are is to look back on the road by which we have travelled to the point we have now reached. When I first took part in political life, in 1884, politics were much simpler than they are now. The dominating question at that particular election which followed soon afterwards was the simple question of the extension of the franchise to the counties. There were, it is true, other political questions, but that was the one which dominated that election. It was, in other words, the completing of the establishment of representative government based upon household suffrage. The issue was so simple that there was no distinction between Liberals and Labour. Men like Mr. Burt and Mr. Fenwick, who were as truly Labour men as any Labour representative of the present day, belonging to, and coming to Parliament direct from, the class of wage-earners, were as much members of the Liberal Party as anyone else. They were offered, and they accepted, membership of the Liberal Party on precisely the same terms and conditions as other Liberal politicians. The issue was very simple, and putting aside the Irish Party, there were only two great Parties —Liberal and Conservative—the Liberal Party having Labour members amongst it. We did not ask many questions, at any rate not so many as we do now. It was assumed that if the government was established on a real representative basis, all the shortcomings of which the country might have been conscious under previous less representative systems of government would find a remedy.

The first thing which occurred to us soon afterwards was that the shortcomings which were really due to previous systems of government did not entirely coincide with the shortcomings which were thought

to be due to them. The things which were due to them were no doubt remedied by the more democratic representative government; but there remained many things, which were thought to be due to previous systems of government, which were, in fact, due to other causes.

At that time no one questioned that democratic representative parliamentary government was the best form of government, and that as far as any government could do it, it would satisfy the needs of the community. Where do we stand to-day? When I entered political life it was the latter part of the epoch of the establishment of democratic representative government. We have lived on to-day into an epoch which regards democratic representative government as on its trial. Its merits and efficiency are questioned as they were not questioned when we were engaged in establishing it. In some countries democratic representative government is no longer regarded as an ideal at all. I do not take what has happened in Russia as an instance, because Russia has never had representative government, and what has never had a trial cannot be said to be superseded or discarded by what has taken place in Russia. But what has happened in Italy lately is very significant. Italy had democratic representative government, but it has now been superseded by something which presumably must have much popular support behind it, but which is not based upon parliamentary election, but on organized force. For the present, at any rate, that system of government which we have regarded as the ideal in this country has been suspended in Italy; and it is possible that under the shock of confusion and chaos that still exists in Europe you may see democratic representative government in some other countries go down, at any rate for a time, in favour of some other system.

There are many people to-day who question the efficacy of democratic representative government in a way that it has never been questioned before. Personally, I remain as attached to democratic representative government as I have ever been. I am not going over a long list of achievements under that system, such as development of education, the general standard of life, and the securing of impartial administration of justice—a long list might be given under which democratic representative government, compared with systems which preceded it, must be pronounced a great success. But there are people who judge it, not by the standard of what preceded it, but by the standard of what they think ought to be done; and it is possible to argue, at any rate as regards some things which have been done in recent years under democratic representative government, that they might have been accomplished under some other system.

There is, however, one thing which I believe to be indisputable—it is this: that under democratic representative government we are enjoying the greatest amount of individual personal liberty that has ever been enjoyed in any country. I was once present at a conversation that interested me, which took place in the United States between two people, both of experience and intelligence, who were comparing life in the United States with life in Great Britain. One of them said: 'What I like in the United States is the entire absence of all class feeling; in England, there are the old class traditions, the barriers of reserve, and there is still, though less than there used to be, a considerable amount of class feeling. In the United States some people are richer than others, but there is not the same consciousness of class differences; there is a sense of everybody meeting as equals with a frankness and absence of embarrassment or reserve which I find exceedingly refreshing.' (My

own short experience of the United States made me feel that too.) The other man said: 'That is true, but on the other hand, there is in the United States more executive interference with personal liberty than there is in Great Britain, and American people here are more tolerant of that interference.' (I cannot of my own knowledge express an opinion on this point.) But the conversation interested me, and set me thinking—to what is our personal liberty in this country really due, and what is its chief guarantee? It seems to me that its great guarantee is this: that not only have we a government elected by popular vote, but dependent from day to day, when Parliament is sitting, upon the confidence of the representatives of the people in the House of Commons: if anything occurs in this country which is regarded as an undue interference with personal liberty of individuals, of whatever class, or if anything occurs which outrages our sense of fairness, it is known that either the government must put that right or cease to exist. The daily responsibility, when Parliament is sitting, of the government to the elected representatives of the people is, I consider, our great guarantee of personal liberty. I cannot imagine any other system of government which would not interfere with personal liberty to a much greater extent than the system we now have. It is possible to argue that we might gain certain advantages by some other system of government, but I am sure the price we should have to pay would be that of submitting to much greater interference with personal liberty than under the system we have at present. This asset of personal liberty is so great that whatever shortcomings there may be in the present system, I prefer the ills of the present to the ills of any other system, which would impose new and stringent restrictions on personal liberty.

I am, therefore, examining shortcomings, not with

the object of showing that democratic representative government is something that could with advantage be superseded or replaced, but to consider how best it can be strengthened and improved. One of the things to beware of in democratic representative government is reliance upon formulas which may not be based on sound premisses. There is no more pleasing formula than that of 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. In Abraham Lincoln's great speech it had a magnificent place. But it is well not to use that formula too confidently. It presupposes that the people are both willing and capable of governing. If they are not willing and capable of governing, the formula has no value. In the same way, consider 'government by public opinion' as a formula. Public opinion—that highest tribunal with which I have heard leaders of opposition threaten governments in the House of Commons. It is an admirable formula; but it presupposes not only that public opinion exists, but that on any particular question there is a public opinion ready to decide the issue. Indeed, it presupposes that the supreme statesman in democratic government is public opinion. Many of the shortcomings of democratic government are due to the fact that public opinion is not necessarily a great statesman at all.

For example, I will take the history over a long series of years of our dealings with Ireland. For a long time there was practically no public opinion about Ireland. It knew nothing about and was not interested in Ireland. That was not statesmanlike. Many of the evils of British government in Ireland were due to that. Then one of the great English parties adopted Home Rule, and public opinion did become very interested indeed in Ireland. But it was so divided that as a matter of fact it did not make it possible for any policy to be consistently pursued. I dare say his-

torians of the future will find fault with the want of statesmanship in British dealings with Ireland, and they will find fault with statesmen: but the real fault was, I think, with public opinion. The Home Ruler will hold that if there had been a sufficiently overwhelming public opinion to make Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measure prevail in 1886, Irish difficulties would have been solved. Unionists, on the other hand, will hold that if only public opinion had been solid in supporting the policy of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, and in giving no countenance to Home Rule, the Irish problems would have been solved in that way. The answer of both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury might well be: that each believed in his own policy for Ireland, but that neither of them had had a real chance to give effect to his policy. Either might have been right or either might have been wrong. But public opinion was so divided that neither policy was given a sufficient chance of success. That is want of statesmanship in public opinion.

It is true that a definite policy towards Ireland has been adopted now, but I think public opinion acquiesced in it rather than approved it. I am not thinking of criticizing it. But I do think that public opinion acquiesced in that settlement, not so much as an act of statesmanship or of considered opinion as from passive acquiescence due to sheer exhaustion. If that be so, it leads to this reflection: that in a democratic representative government we want statesmanship, and the only secure basis of statesmanship is that public opinion should be statesmanlike.

That carries me a little farther to another reflection. In those years—from 1885 to 1914—the great dividing issues between parties were the extension of the franchise to the counties, Irish Home Rule, and Tariff Reform. These three questions were purely political questions; that is to say, they could be

carried into operation by Act of Parliament, by a stroke of the parliamentary pen, and could have been put into operation in no other way. That alone made the problem comparatively simple and entirely one for political parties.

But, now, what is the most important domestic question in our public affairs at the present moment? I should say it is the relations between Capital and Labour—between employers and employed. It transcends in importance all questions of domestic politics. How far is that a political question in the sense of being one to be solved by parties in the House of Commons? If you hold that the solution is the destruction of private enterprise, the nationalization of great industries, of course it is a political question to be settled by Parliament. But I think the majority of people, deeply impressed as they are by the fact that relations between Capital and Labour are not satisfactory, are not yet of opinion that nationalization would make things better; and although they are convinced that there ought to be and must be a change, they are looking for the change in other directions. Now, in what direction? I read the other day a book, evidently written with knowledge and I think with a sincere desire to be impartial, on the subject of what the great mass of organized labour really most desires. What are the points which are at the moment causing the most interest and anxiety amongst the wage-earning classes? I give them in the order stated by the writer as that in which they are felt by wage-earners to be most urgent and important to themselves.

The first is security against unemployment—not merely to relieve present unemployment, but to give security against it in the future. The writer had gathered from the wage-earners themselves that, if they could have security against the apprehension that employment might not be permanent, it would be

regarded by them as one of the greatest assets they could obtain.

Well, I believe the best way of dealing with that point, the most helpful way of dealing with it, with the minimum of waste and the avoidance of abuse, combined with the maximum of efficiency, would be a real insurance against unemployment in the great trades themselves. I do not want to argue the merits of this. My point is that if this be so, though government may assist, it is in the main something that must be worked out by employers and employed acting together.

Second, the writer puts the status of the worker. The wage-earners, he said, resent having no share in the businesses, and not merely no share in the management, but they resent the feeling that all arrangements for carrying on the business which affects their daily life are made solely with reference to the convenience of the employer, without the workers being considered or given any share in the ordering of the work. That is to say, the workers desire to be regarded not as mere parts of a machine, but as something to be consulted in the working of that machine.

That is a difficult question. I do not believe that Parliament could settle it satisfactorily. It is a most important question; but it can be dealt with, and must be dealt with, by goodwill and statesmanship on the part of employers and employed, dealing with each other direct and not by the indirect route of Parliament.

Third, the writer puts the question of wages—that the workers should get the maximum share that is possible out of the profits of the industry. That again is a question which I do not believe can be settled by the State, but must be settled by employers and employed; that is to say, by the great organized bodies of employers and the great organized bodies of labour consulting together.

These questions, which are of vital importance, are questions that require great statesmanship, just as much statesmanship as is required in dealing with problems in Parliament, but the statesmanship will have to be applied direct by the people concerned themselves. In democracy there is more than ever need for statesmanship: and if democracy is to work well in dealing with many problems which could not be dealt with adequately through parliamentary representatives, the people most concerned must apply that statesmanship direct in dealing with their own problems.

Having arrived at this point, that there is a great need for more statesmanship in public opinion, let us ask, What is the remedy? The true answer, I believe, is in the word 'education'. Not primary, not secondary, but adult education, the education which the people give themselves after they have got past the best primary and secondary education they can get. In other words, it is the bringing of university education within reach of those who have had secondary education and are now engaged in various professions and other walks of life. I am told that there is an immense demand for that form of education: that there is a real thirst for it, such as has hitherto been unknown. If that is so, it is a demand that should be met, and happily, it is one that can be met. It has the advantage over primary and secondary education, in that it costs infinitely less in money to bring a good university education within the reach of those who wish to take advantage of it—because you do not require a vast outlay on new school buildings and the cost of maintaining such, which is necessary for primary or secondary education. I am told that £500,000 a year would do an enormous amount in this way for people who realize that the education that really becomes part of a man or woman's self is the education that they

seek and find themselves, when they are grown up. £500,000 a year would do an immense national service in this way.

Another great source of education is the press. My own unfortunate disability of sight prevents me from being able to make extensive reading of the press. But from what reading I do make, I find it very easy to get very much admirable information in the press, and to find leading articles which, whether or not I agree with the particular conclusions, are evidently written with knowledge, thought, and force. If you have any criticism to make on the press, I think the answer of the press would be this: those who control the press study the circulation of their papers; people can have the sort of press they deserve, and it rests with the people themselves. As I have said, from my own experience, you can to-day get excellent education from the press, and it rests with the people themselves to secure and read the press where it is to be found.

A third source of education is the politicians themselves. I have no sympathy with the abuse of politicians. I would say again, that the people get the politicians they deserve. The remedy is in their own hands. I would make only this one point on this subject. There is too much tendency (take the literature which is issued at political elections, for example) to talk down to people unnecessarily, instead of expecting people to come up to a higher level. I have seen political leaflets—I won't say from which party they came—that seemed to be written on the assumption that the average elector was childish, absolutely ignorant, and entirely selfish. I think that political literature or speeches which under-estimate the mental or moral level of the community are simply so much waste. They do not get real response from democracy: a great response is given only to an appeal

to the higher and not the lower instincts and feelings of the community.

This was brought to my mind in strong and convincing manner by having the good fortune during the war to have many conversations with the late Mr. Page, who was American Ambassador to this country. What an inestimable debt this country owes to him it is now beginning to understand! I cannot here review his career, or enter upon an extensive eulogy of Mr. Page; there was no man for whom I came to have a greater admiration and personal regard, but I can only tell you to-day two things which impressed me specially about him, and which occur to me now as being specially relevant to this point.

One was his intense feeling for right against wrong. Once he became sensible that a moral issue was involved, from that moment right or wrong was the supreme test with him. It decided his opinion absolutely, and made him on that particular issue have all the conviction, the fervour, the energy that a man has who is possessed with strong views on the question of religion. The other point was this: that having convinced himself on what was right, nothing would shake his belief that if a great democracy, especially his own democracy, was appealed to on a vital question in a great manner, it would most certainly respond. If a democracy did not respond to a great appeal, his view was, not that the appeal was above their heads, but that the appeal had not been lofty enough. If only it was great, lofty, and noble, his faith was that democracy, when so appealed to, would rise and respond. I never met any one who made me feel so certain that his trust in the people was sincere, deep, and unshakeable. The late Mr. Page was a man who really did trust the people. I regarded him as the most convinced believer in democracy that I have ever known. These two qualities of Mr. Page

I have referred to as being qualities upon which politicians, I think, could rely more than they do, and which they should particularly encourage and cultivate.

To sum up the past, I would observe that one of the great dangers in democracy is the lack of interest, lethargy, and therefore absence of public opinion. There is no better, no more certain corrective of that than to make it clear that moral issues are involved. Once that is made clear, the public interest is certainly aroused. The other danger is the great activity on the part of a section of public opinion, an activity which is ill-informed and therefore misdirected, an activity which is based on the assumption that they know everything, when as a matter of fact they may know very little. The greatest corrective of that is education, particularly adult education.

One factor no doubt in interesting democracy, in making public opinion vital, is to have in public life striking personalities. It is not enough that there should be only ideas, knowledge, and principles: there must be strong and vivid personalities. The history of all religions is an illustration of what I mean. Moral principles have always been something of which different generations of men have been aware: but there comes at certain great epochs in human history some great person in whom these great principles are embodied, and they at once become vital and living, moving masses of mankind in a way they have not done before. I am not thinking merely of Christianity, but of all great religious movements, such as Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. You find behind these great movements a great personality.

So in our public affairs we want personalities who are striking and interesting, and who become the embodiment of fine and lofty ideas. There is indeed this danger, that a democracy may set too high

a premium upon the gift of public speaking. The public man becomes interesting by the gift of public speaking, and we are apt to over-estimate people through admiration of the excellence of their speech. Cogency of language, as we listen to it, makes us feel that there must be behind it knowledge, firmness, a lofty moral purpose—all the great qualities that we want a man to possess—but it does not follow that those things are behind the gift of speech. Sometimes, one thinks that in a democracy the gift of public speech has an undue advantage over other qualities, and that democracy is likely to be led away and to mistake some of the smaller men for the greater men, and to ignore some of the greater men who may not have the same gift of eloquence. I do not think that danger is so great as might be supposed. I think it was Wordsworth who, towards the end of the eighteenth century, after hearing some of the great speakers in Parliament of that day, said that 'he came away from listening to Burke with his head full; from listening to Fox with his feelings excited; and from listening to Pitt with astonishment at his power to make the worse appear the better reason'.

But there are many men who have qualities greater than their gift of speech. The late Mr. Thomas Burt was an excellent speaker; yet there were many other excellent speakers, some of them more effective than he in making an audience cheer, who never attained the same influence in public life. The reason was this: that Mr. Burt's ascendancy was due not so much to his gift of speech, in which he did not surpass some others, as to the character, sincerity, wide knowledge, and range of mind which informed his speech. And so in the long run, I do believe that, though for public life a certain gift of speech is necessary, the man with character and wide understanding of human problems will win in the end, as against the man with remarkable

gift of speech, but deficient in character or real ability of thought and understanding.

Another point worth considering—besides the effect of public men on public life—is the effect of public life on public men. Most of us are people of mixed motives. For instance, when we begin to prepare a speech, we may think solely of the merits of our subject: but before we come to deliver our speech there will have crept into it things which have been prompted by a desire to please and to succeed. It is quite right that there should be some such things in every speech. The late Professor Jowett (I do not know if it is true) is said to have advised a man, when writing, to read his manuscript carefully and to strike out anything that struck him as being particularly fine. You could not apply that to public speaking; nobody would listen. I remember an amusing story (told, I think, by Mr. Bernard Shaw) of a man who was a keen politician but a bad speaker. His imperfections in this respect were counter-balanced by excellence in playing the concertina. In order to collect a crowd at the street corner, he would play his concertina. When he spoke, the audience gradually diminished. His concertina was then brought into play again, and the crowd would again collect. In this way he sought to get his points brought home to the people. It is legitimate, with most of us it is even necessary, that in our speeches there should be a certain amount of concertina playing, if we are fortunate enough to have any gift for playing it.

As to mixed motives, I would credit a parliamentary candidate with three motives, viz.: (1) A desire to serve the interests of the country; (2) a desire to serve the interests of his party, believing that this was the most practical form in which to achieve the former object; (3) a desire for personal success, which may be a legitimate, indeed wholesome motive, provided it is

kept within bounds; because with the ordinary man—I am not speaking of rare idealists—the desire for personal success greatly facilitates his work and helps him to get hard work out of himself. But that desire has its dangers. The tendency is, in the long run, for a man's views of public life to be decided not by the interest of the country but by the desire for personal success, which at the beginning is to be regarded as a useful stimulus, but which is not the highest, and should never become the dominant, motive. There is a law, I believe, in currency, which says that if good money and bad money are put into circulation together, the bad money drives out the good. And there is a tendency for the inferior motive to drive out the superior motive in a man's character.

The sound advice, therefore, to a young man entering public life, is to watch his motives, to watch them constantly and carefully. In public life, if all secrets were known, we should probably find in the record of public men a considerable proportion who started their life with high motives and ended it dominated by smaller ones. I would say, watch your motives, be honest with yourselves about your motives. That, I believe, is one of the most important rules for any man to observe in dealing with public affairs, and indeed in all the conduct of his life.

It was said once that there were seven wise men in Greece, who gained their reputation by their wise sayings. One of them apparently contributed greatly to his reputation by the saying: 'Know thyself'. I used to think that he got his reputation cheaply. I am convinced now that there is a very large number of people who do not know themselves, and I am quite certain from my own experience that, instead of being easy, it is exceedingly difficult to know oneself. The more we can know ourselves, the better we are for public service. The more we can keep the higher

motives in the dominant place in ourselves, the less likely we are to be driven from our course by being over-blamed or over-praised. Public men are nearly always being over-blamed or over-praised, and the more knowledge they have of themselves, the less likely they are to be unduly depressed by the one or to be unduly elated by the other.

There is a story which is useful for a man in public affairs to remember. It runs: that in olden times an oriental Sultan ordered his Grand Vizier to get engraved on his favourite ring a motto which would encourage him in adversity and keep him modest in prosperity. It had necessarily to be a short sentence, and yet it must serve this double purpose. The Grand Vizier was equal to the occasion. He advised the Sultan to have engraved on the ring the following sentence: 'And this also shall pass away'. That does not mean that our attitude is to be one of 'waiting to see it pass away': but it means that, being sure of our motives and our principles, we should hold them fast in success and should not be unduly depressed when we find things are not going as we wish. This latter aspect of the motto is specially to be commended in the present time, when things are certainly not going as we wish. It should encourage us to persist and to hold on to the course which we think right. At the present moment, when many things seem to be going wrong, although we may not be able to put them right all at once, yet if the country makes up its mind to stand by what it thinks is right, and if it hoists its standard, other peoples, although perhaps not immediately, may gradually rally round that standard.

To most people it is essential that they should continually examine the motives from which they act. There are a few exceptions, men so happily constituted that they have little or no need for this. Unconsciously, and without effort on their part, their

motives remain unselfish, sincere, and pure. I know no better instance of that purity and unselfishness of motive in a public capacity than the fourth Earl Grey, in whose memory these lectures are given. He was not without a just pleasure in popularity and in good reputation. He was not without a just sense and a proper pride in the value of a distinguished public position or office. But when he approached a public question he became so possessed by enthusiasm for the ideal, that no other motive except that of promoting this ideal, without regard to the cost to himself or the effect on his own personal reputation, had any weight with him. It is rare in a public man to have this quality in such a remarkable degree. I had differences of opinion with him on questions of the day, and I dare say many of these lectures will contain things with which he might not have agreed, for you will never get men of active and able minds who are all in agreement on all their conclusions. Yet there can be no better preparation for those who give these memorial lectures than to reflect upon his life from the point of view of the motives which inspired him. He, at any rate, never lacked interest in public affairs; he was always enthusiastic and unselfish, and his interest was ardent, sincere, and generous. One who knew him well said of him—and it was true—'He lit many fires in cold rooms'. That is one high type of spirit which we need in our public men. That is the spirit which will make the lectures given here worthy memorials of him. That is the spirit in which I have tried to address you to-day—not so much to give instruction, as to consider where we are at the present time: how we can remedy some of the shortcomings of the present day, in what spirit we should try to solve our urgent problems. And my last word would be—in these difficult times, let us, as far as we possibly can, regard fairly and wisely these complicated questions

whether at home or abroad, putting aside individual prejudices, earnestly striving to deal with them on their merits, adopting no popular conclusions which we feel to be unsound, but shrinking from none that we believe to be worthy and right, and doing our best to contribute to make a public opinion which shall be alert, interested, sound, and statesmanlike.

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# THE PROBLEM OF TIMON OF ATHENS

BY

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# THE PROBLEM OF TIMON OF ATHENS

BY

PROFESSOR PARROTT

# THE PROBLEM OF TIMON OF ATHENS

FOR the critical student of Shakespeare *Timon of Athens* has an attraction peculiarly its own. It is perhaps the most interesting work that has come down to us from his later years at once fascinating, perplexing, and disappointing. Gleams of Shakespeare's unmistakeable gift of dramatic expression, fitful flashes of his genial characterization, noble strains of his inimitable music are all here, but surrounded, encumbered, buried, one might almost say, by masses of incoherent, prosaic and often manifestly mutilated matter. The theme, the ruin of a frank and generous soul by ingratitude, public and private, is no unfit subject for tragedy, the treatment of this theme in *Timon* presents some very effective scenes, yet as it stands it is a simply impossible play. Shadwell, the Restoration playwright, was no idle boaster when he affirmed in the dedication to his version of *Timon* 'the inimitable hand of Shakespeare never made more masterly strokes than in this work, yet I can truly say I have made it into a play.' And so he did. To the lover of Shakespeare, Shadwell's version, with its fickle hero wavering like the ass of Buridan between a constant mistress and a heartless bride, and its alternating scenes of Restoration flippancy and Restoration rant, reads like a profanation. But Shadwell's version held the stage for over half a century, and all attempts to revive the old play have been signal failures.

The explanation of the dramatic impossibility of *Timon* is after all, quite simple. There is not enough

of the creative power of Shakespeare in the play to quicken the whole into dramatic life. *Timon* must always remain a play for a study rather than for the stage, and the problem that confronts the student is to determine first how much of Shakespeare can be found in the work; and, secondly, how it comes to be there.

Curiously enough the existence of this problem was unsuspected until about a century ago. It was not until 1838 that the first attempt was made to explain the inconsistencies and incongruities of *Timon* by the hypothesis of an older play slightly and intermittently retouched by Shakespeare. The contrary hypothesis of an imperfect sketch by Shakespeare, prepared for the stage by a later writer, was first suggested in 1847. Since that time critical opinion has wavered uncertainly between these views, and except for an ingenious and painstaking thesis by Wright, of Columbia University, little has been done to solve the problem until the recent work of J. M. Robertson in his *Shakespeare and Chapman*, 1917. The vast extent of this veteran scholar's reading in Elizabethan literature, his retentive memory, enormous industry and critical acumen, give to all his work an indisputable value. No matter how shocking to traditional sensibilities his conclusions may appear, they are not to be lightly waived aside. They must be faced, tested, and in the end accepted, modified, or perhaps rejected, after some portion at least of his own patient industry has been expended on their consideration. His conclusion as regards *Timon* may be summarized as follows. The play as a whole may be considered as an imperfect revision by Shakespeare, of one imperfectly drafted by Chapman. Shakespeare's hand appears, after the first act, in which Robertson detects no clear sign of his presence, at intermittent intervals, but even in scenes where the Shakespearian note is unmistakeable, we have to do, he holds, rather with a 'verse revision,' by Shakespeare, than with original composition. In fact,

there is, I believe, but one scene in the whole, the great monologue of Timon at the beginning of Act IV, which Robertson is willing to accept as the pure and original work of the master.

Let me say at once, speaking as an old time student of Chapman, that I feel that Mr. Robertson has distinctly contributed to the solution of the problem of *Timon* by demonstrating, so far as demonstration is possible in such cases, the presence of a certain amount of Chapman matter in the *Timon* amalgam. To have identified the unknown author of some non-Shakespearian portions as Chapman is a real advance. His hypothesis, however, of a Shakespearian revision of a Chapman draft, which saddles upon Shakespeare the final responsibility for all the flaws and inconsistences of the extant play, is, to my mind, quite another matter. I do not believe it to be *a priori* impossible, but it demands, I think, fuller and more effective proof than has yet been offered.

Under these circumstances, then, it has seemed to me that a fresh study of *Timon*, taking into account the new evidence of Chapman's presence, and seeking impartially for a valid explanation of this factor, might not be out of place. And it is such a study that I have the honor to lay before the Shakespeare Association.

The problem as it now stands falls clearly into two parts: A, the determination, as precisely as possible, of the respective shares of Shakespeare and Chapman in the play, bearing always in mind the possibility of a third hand; and B, the determination of the time relation, that is to say, the respective priority of Shakespeare's and Chapman's work. It is evident that a solution of B can only be attempted when a reasonally acceptable answer to A has been attained. Let us then proceed at once to an analysis of the play.

There is no act or scene division in the Folio text, our only authority for this play. I follow throughout the accepted division and the lining of the Globe edition.

I, i. The first scene is properly speaking not a scene at all, but a series of scenes connected merely by their occurrence in the same place. Robertson assigns it all to Chapman. Let us consider it step by step.

a, 1-94. This section consists of an introductory conversation between a painter and a poet. Until Robertson's investigation this passage has always been ascribed to Shakespeare, but he has given us good reason to think otherwise. It would take too long to rehearse the verbal and phrasal similarities which he has pointed out, I will only say that to my mind the evidence offered by diction and parallel phrasing points more plainly to Chapman here than anywhere else in the play.

But there are still other considerations. Deighton in his edition of *Timon* notes twelve passages where the text seems to draw on Lucian's version, and Robertson remarks, quite rightly, that Chapman was far more likely than Shakespeare to use this classic. But eleven out of these twelve seem to have no value; they are mere commonplaces of the *Timon* story, familiar to all Elizabethan writers. The only one of real significance occurs in this section of *Timon*, ll. 63-5, where the conjunction of 'nod' and 'knee' has an exact parallel in the Greek. To those familiar with Chapman's trick of versifying bits of his reading in the classics this is a significant phenomenon. Here if anywhere is a mark of the old scholar's hand.

Let us consider the section from another point of view, that of dramatic technique. If we compare the opening scene of *Timon* with those of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear* or *Macbeth*, all plays of the *Timon* period, we note a striking difference. Shakespeare knew the value of a strong opening. He strikes the keynote of the theme at once as in the first lines of *Macbeth*, or plunges straightway into the action as in *Lear* or *Othello*, or unites both methods as in the masterful first scene of *Hamlet*. Here on the contrary we get about 100 lines of talk by

characters who play no part in the action. Their dialogue, to be sure gives us some notion of Timon and of his situation; it is expository, but in somewhat general and moralizing terms. Now this is the very method of Chapman. The opening scenes of *Byron's Conspiracy* and of the *Revenge for Bussy*, both plays of Chapman's later period, reveal a marked likeness in technique to this section of *Timon*.

I note, however, not only this general resemblance but an occasional minor likeness. The Poet, is, in effect, Chapman himself, with all Chapman's love of moralizing. His poetic description of Fortune is just what one might expect to find in a Chapman poem. The reference to a picture, presumably of Timon, followed by the Poet's symbolic representation of Timon seated on the hill of Fortune calls to mind a passage in *Byron's Conspiracy* (III, ii) where after some talk about the hero's portrait Byron proposes to substitute for it a symbolic statue of himself carved from a mountain. To sum up, I find myself as regards this section in complete agreement with Robertson and assign it to Chapman.

b, 95-151. It is another matter when we pass to the next section. Here the verbal clews to Chapman fail. Robertson notes as his the phrase 'periods his comfort,' but this trick of making a noun do a verb's business is quite in Shakespeare's manner. Abbott in his *Shakespearian Grammar* gives a host of examples; one of them from *Macbeth* 'trifles former knowing' is an almost exact analogue. Robertson also calls attention to a 'Chapman ellipsis' in the omission of the nominative relative in line 98; but Abbott cites over twenty such omissions in Shakespeare, and a student of mine has noted sixteen in the *Changling* and eighteen in the *The White Devil*. It is not a peculiarity of Chapman's but a common Elizabethan idiom.

If we turn from the vocabulary to larger matter, we note a change in dramatic technique. Here the dialogue

is direct and to the point. The liberation of Ventidius begins an action which was meant, I believe, to have a fuller and more significant effect than the present condition of the play reveals. And this passage, and the dialogue with the old Athenian which follows, both serve to characterize the protagonist, not by description, as in section a, but by action. And that is Shakespeare's way. And here, I think, we have Shakespeare's Timon, no prodigal nor spendthrift, but a kindly benefactor, gentle and gracious, a true Shakespearian hero. Compare this presentation of Timon with that of the reveller and vain dreamer in the following scene and consider whether the two portraits are by the same hand. To me it seems almost incredible.

Moreover this general likeness is re-inforced by certain Shakespearian touches; 'creditors most straight,' 'I am not of that feather,' 'one that holds a trencher,' I would not overstress these phrases, but in the absence of any clews to Chapman they are not without significance. I therefore assign section b to Shakespeare.

c, 152-176. This section picks up again the painter and poet of section a. There are no striking verbal clews in this short passage, but it belongs no doubt to the writer of section a, i.e. to Chapman.

d, 177-248. This section is taken up with the cynical patter of Apemantus. Robertson notes no Chapman clews, and I find nothing to mark it as Shakespeare's. Much of it seems unworthy of either, but Chapman when he stooped to folly could sink very low, and the quick fire of repartee in the form of question and answer is rather like certain passages in Chapman's late play *Cæsar and Pompey*, the dialogue between Fronto and Ophioneus in I, ii and that between Pompey and Demetrius on the one part and Cornelia on the other in V, i. This, then, I assign, with some hesitation to Chapman.

e, 249-64. This brief passage affords no clews to

Chapman. It is direct dramatic verse and has in several places the true Shakespearian ring:

> Achés contract and starve your supple joints.

That is Shakespeare's voice, not Chapman's. And the phrase

> The strain of man's bred out into baboon and monkey,

is his also, an echo of a sentiment we catch again and again on *Lear*.

Short as this section is, it is not without significance. It reveals the bitter cynicism of Shakespeare's Apemantus and it introduces Alcibiades and shows the friendly relation between him and Timon. I assign this section to Shakespeare.

f, 265-83. Another bit of Apemantus patter follows, a palpable insertion in the action. If section d is Chapman's, this also may be assigned to him.

g, 284-94. The closing lines of the scene present no verbal clews either to Chapman or Shakespeare. Were they Chapman's we should find, I think, some of the rimed 'sentences' so common in his work. I am inclined to believe them a Shakespearian fragment meant to wind up his opening scene with a chorus-like comment.

I have dwelt so long upon this first scene because its patchy nature is characteristic of the play as a whole, and because, as I hope to show later, the determination of certain sections in this scene as Shakespearian may prove of real importance in fixing the relative priority of the two main strata of the play. The second scene, fortunately, offers less difficulty. It has long been recognised as non-Shakespearian. It muddles the action by introducing the offer of Ventidius to repay Timon's loan. Now Ventidius has just been released by this loan from a debtor's prison. It seems clear that the mention of his father's death and his new fortune is derived from a

later and Shakespearian scene. It blurs the characterization. The Steward who, in this scene only, gets the name of Flavius—Flavius is in reality one of the minor servants—expresses the wish that he were gently put out office before he were forced out. And the character of Timon himself shifts and sinks below the mark that Shakespeare had set up in the first scene.

The verbal clews for Chapman are not very strong. But there are other indications. The introduction of the masque is in his manner. Jonson, we know, remarked that next to himself only Chapman and Fletcher could make a masque, and Chapman certainly introduces masques into his plays at every opportunity. The masque here is presented by Cupid; so is that in *Byron's Conspiracy*. The feasters rise from the table to dance with the ladies of the masque; the same thing occurs in *The Widow's Tears*. On the other hand there is so much broken verse in the longer speeches as to suggest considerable cutting. I fancy that Chapman wrote a banquet scene much longer than this and that a reviser cut it down ruthlessly, possibly inserting some more patter for Apemantus and some of the frequent rimed couplets. But the scene as a whole may be assigned to Chapman.

II, i. The second act opens with a true Shakespearian scene. Robertson speaks of it as revised by Shakespeare, but if Shakespeare re-wrote a Chapman scene here he has completely obliterated all trace of his predecessor. The supposed verbal clews to Chapman seem to me to lack validity. On the other hand the vigorous dramatic action and sharp characterization speak for Shakespeare. We miss the moralizing vein of Chapman. The usurer of this scene means business and has no time to waste on sententious maxims. I take the scene to be wholly Shakespeare's, probably a hasty first draft.

II, ii. The second scene falls into three parts, or one might better say that it is a continuous scene broken up by a patent interpolation.

a, 1-46. This section I believe to be essentially Shakespeare's. I confess to some distrust of the opening speech where the inserted rimed moral sounds like Chapman; and the threat of the steward to be 'round' with Timon reminds me of Bassiolo in *The Gentleman Usher*. But the quick action and the vigorous dialogue are not in Chapman's manner, and the character of Timon reverts to that of the Shakespearian parts of the opening scene. This section continues directly and strongly the course of action begun in the previous scene.

b, 47-131. This section has been universally rejected as Shakespearian. It has been inserted here to tickle the groundlings with the buffoonery of Apemantus and may, like the earlier Apemantus passages, belong to Chapman.

c, 132-242. After this interruption the action resumes its course. This section as a whole is plainly Shakespeare's. Even Robertson calls it a Shakespearian revision, but we look in vain for any evidence of Chapman's presence. The dialogue is in flowing Shakespearian verse; the characterization of Timon and the Steward continues along Shakespearian lines, and the section is alive with Shakespearian touches:

> To Lacedaemon did my land extend
> . . . . . .
> Unwisely, not ignobly have I given—

That is Shakespeare's Timon speaking. And here is Shakespeare's Steward:

> —So the Gods bless me
> When all our offices have been oppress'd
> With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept
> With drunken spilth of wine, when every room
> Hath blaz'd with lights and bray'd with minstrelsy
> I have retired me to a wasteful cock
> And set mine eyes at flow.

Yet the section as it stands is not free from corruption. There is a prose bit at line 195 in the midst of Timon's verse which suddenly introduces a hitherto unheard-of character, Sempronius. This is not Shakespeare's way, and Wright has shown how by the excision of a few words this character can be elided and the text restored to verse. Possibly a flaw in the original manuscript here suggested to the reviser a patch which would prepare for the later scene with Sempronius. The vigor of the dialogue seems to flag towards the close of the scene, and it is not impossible that it may have been touched up here and there, but the core of this section is unmistakably and, I believe, originally Shakespeare's.

It may be worth noting here that in l. 208 Timon sends to the Senate for what Robertson thinks the impossible sum of 1,000 talents, a figure which reveals, he holds, Shakespeare's ignorance of the value of the talent. I am not concerned to defend Shakespeare's classical knowledge, but I would point out that in North's *Antony*—which Shakespeare must have known almost by heart—there is such frequent reference to large sums of talents that Shakespeare may well have been misled as to their value. Thus Antony while still a youth was in debt 250 talents; a certain Egyptian gave Octavius 1,000 talents to spare the tomb of Cleopatra, and Calpurnia after the death of Julius handed over 4,000 talents to Antony for safe keeping. In view of these figures there seems nothing startling in Shakespeare's notion that the wealthy Timon had lent 1,000 talents to the State. Such loans on the part of wealthy citizens were well known in English history. I do not see, then, that any argument against Shakespeare's priority can be based, as Robertson would have it, on his ignorance of the talent's value.

III, i. The third act opens like the second with a vigorous bit of dramatic dialogue. The first scene falls into two parts.

a, 1-51. This seems to me clearly a bit of Shakespearian prose. Lucullus, who talks quite in the manner of Justice Shallow, is a sharply sketched character. There are no verbal clews to Chapman.

b, 52-66. The last fourteen lines cannot possibly be Shakespeare's. The broken, jolting metre cries out against such an ascription. We may have here a Shakespearian fragment expanded and ruined by a reviser. I see no trace of Chapman.

III, ii. If the preceding scene is Shakespeare's this is also, for they form a part of a coherent dramatic action. There are no verbal clews to Chapman and one or two characteristic Shakespearian touches, as:

> He ne'er drinks
> But Timon's silver treads upon his lip.

And a phrase that recalls the theme of *Lear*:

> O see the monstrousness of man
> When he looks out in an ungrateful shape.

Further the hypocritical Lucius is sharply discriminated from the shameless Lucullus of the preceding scene. Such brief yet effective characterization is quite out of Chapman's reach.

III, iii. The third scene has been universally rejected. The broken metre and the hopelessly commonplace diction exclude it from the Shakespearian group. But there are no clews to Chapman and my own belief is that the scene was hastily scrambled together by the reviser who inserted the Sempronius patch in II, ii. It is perhaps worth noting that Sempronius is identified in the Folio stage direction at the beginning of this scene as 'another of Timon's friends,' and that he never appears again, although some modern editors introduce him at the mock banquet.

III, iv. The fourth scene is also un-Shakespearian. It is crowded with new and confused characters; the verse

is ragged and patched here and there with rimed couplets, and the un-Shakespearian Sempronius is mentioned towards the close. There are no verbal clews to Chapman, but one or two stage directions remind me of him.

III, v. In regard to the fifth scene I am happy to find myself in complete accord with Mr. Robertson. The verbal clews to Chapman do not seem to me so strong as he conceives them, but they exist. And the whole tone and spirit of the scene is Chapman's. It is a formal debate in true Chapman fashion on the topic, 'Killing no Murder'; and the twelve rimed couplets are all moral maxims of the Chapman type. I believe the scene was originally much longer as irregular lines at frequent intervals point to heavy cutting.

III, vi. This scene is one of the most difficult in the whole play. It is the climax of the drama. If Shakespeare designed the play he must at least have sketched some such scene as this. And there are Shakespearian touches in it. The two nameless lords who open the scene correspond closely to Lucius and Lucullus,—Shakespearian characters. The prayer of Timon reads like a draft in Shakespearian prose, and there are unmistakable Shakespearian notes in Timon's great out-burst 'mouth-friends,' 'cap-and-knee slaves,' 'minute jacks.' On the other hand there occurs in this very speech a close parallel to a line in *Sir Giles Goosecap*, especially close if one keeps the Folio reading, 'who stuck and spangled you with flatteries.' The lines that follow this speech fall far below the mark of either Shakespeare or Chapman. I can only conjecture that Shakespeare drafted the scene, that Chapman touched it up and that the reviser finished it off. Signs of the latter's hand are visible in the rimed tags at the end of Timon's speech which are not, I think, in Chapman's manner. Certainly if Shakespeare had laid the final hand on this important scene he would, one feels, have made something more of it.

IV, i. The fourth act opens with the great curse of Timon. This is pure and unmistakable Shakespeare and the scene has never been suspected. It is only a question as to whether the last six lines—three rimed couplets, are his. It was not Shakespeare's custom to end a scene with a group of these, and the last two are singularly weak and ineffective. I suggest that the reviser has added these to an original Shakespeare scene.

IV, ii. This scene falls into two sections.

a, 1-29. It opens with the disposal of Timon's household and shows the touching loyalty of his servants. That this is Shakespeare's has never been doubted.

b, 30-50. The monologue of the Steward which closes the scene has long been suspected and I agree with Robertson in assigning it to Chapman.

IV, iii. The long third scene like the first of the play is really a succession of scenes linked together by the continuous presence of Timon.

a, 1-47. The first section consists of a soliloquy by Timon concluding with his discovery of the buried gold. It has been generally ascribed to Shakespeare, but one has only to compare it with the first section of this act to catch the difference between pure and adulterated Shakespearian verse. The metre is often broken and irregular, and we find an unusual number of 'nonce-words'—some of them occur in Chapman, more do not—at least, Robertson cites no examples. Some of these appear in lines that have to my ear the true Shakespearian ring, as ll. 39-41. Apart from the supposed Chapman words I can see no signs of his hand, and would explain the section as resting on an imperfect draft or faulty manuscript of Shakespeare's touched up by the reviser.

b, 48-175. The interview of Timon with Alcibiades and the courtesans has, like the first section, been generally ascribed to Shakespeare. However, it seems not altogether his work. It contains a curious contra-

diction as to Alcibiades' knowledge of Timon's affairs. He says first, l. 66, that he knows nothing of Timon's fortunes; then, l. 76, that he 'has heard in some sort of his miseries,' and finally, ll. 92-5, in a passage that sounds like Shakespeare, that he has learned with grief 'how cursed Athens . . .' The speech is interrupted, but implies clearly enough the knowledge of the ungrateful refusal of the Senate to succor Timon. I would not lay too much stress upon such inconsistencies. Shakespeare's plays were written to be heard on the stage, not analysed in the study; and inconsistencies that the critic snaps up would often pass unnoticed by an audience. Yet I can hardly believe that it was Shakespeare who made Alcibiades contradict himself so plainly within the compass of a few lines.

There are, moreover, an unusually large number of 'nonce-words' in this section. Some of them can be explained; few of them are found in Chapman. Yet the mere number is suspicious. I conclude that the section rests upon an imperfect Shakespearian original revised and enlarged, just possibly with Chapman's aid, although apart from the supposed Chapman words I find no trace of his hand.

c, 176-96. The following brief soliloquy by Timon is shown by rhythm and spirit alike to be Shakespeare's. The vocabulary at times might suggest Chapman, but I believe all the examples cited by Robertson are capable of explanation.

d and e. The long scene with Apemantus is clearly divisible into two parts. The first, in verse, seems to me pure Shakespeare, with one possible exception, the speech of Apemantus, ll. 239-248, which, as the defective metre and commonplace diction show has been patched up or copied from an imperfect manuscript. When, however, we come to the prose dialogue (beginning at l. 290), closing with a little patch of verse, we note an instant change. The fine dramatic con-

trast between Apemantus, the professional cynic, and Timon, the ruined misanthropist, disappears and both sink to the common level of ribald abuse. No student of Shakespeare can believe this to be his. Like the early Apemantus scenes, it may possibly be the work of Chapman. We note towards the end of this section l. 356, a reference to the approach of the painter and the poet—Chapman characters—who, however, do not appear until the beginning of the next act. Shakespeare would never have committed such a dramatic *faux pas*, nor would he, I think, have allowed it to remain in a scene which he revised. We have there, I believe, another instance of the confusion wrought by Chapman and the reviser.

f, 371-454. The next section begins with a Timon soliloquy, continues with his farewell to Apemantus and concludes with the episode of the bandits. The first two of these are undisputed Shakespeare. Robertson calls the last Chapman matter revised by Shakespeare. As there are no traces of Chapman vocabulary this assertion would appear to rest upon the paraphrase of Ronsard, which is found in ll. 439 ff. But this is no good ground for building a claim to Chapman's authorship. Ronsard, the most famous of French poets in Shakespeare's day, was certainly read by Shakespeare. A well-known passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, xiv, 151 ff, is plainly paraphrased from Ronsard, and what Shakespeare did in *Antony and Cleopatra* he may very well have done in *Timon*. Shakespeare's hand is evident in the rhythm of the verse and the half-humorous, half-ironical prose which ends the section. I ascribe this whole section unreservedly to Shakespeare.

g, 463-543. I agree with Robertson in assigning the interview between Timon and the Steward to Chapman. There is not to my mind a single sure trace of Shakespeare in the section.

Chapman's uncertainty in characterization appears in

the way in which Timon first suspects the Steward and then excepts him from the number of the ungrateful. It is out of keeping, I think, with Shakespeare's conception of the perfect misanthrope that he should make even one exception, unless, indeed, this one should restore him to sanity, as the love of Cordelia restores Lear. And of this there is no trace; Timon's bitterness to mankind in general, and to Athens in particular, remains as fierce after this scene as before.

Here as elsewhere, I think, Chapman's work has been heavily cut. Probably his addition here made this long scene intolerably long.

V, i. This scene falls into two sections.

a, 1-118. The first section introduces the poet and the painter. As they were shown to be Chapman characters in the first act they are presumably so in this, and their speech shows some traces of Chapman's vocabulary. This section like others shows signs of cutting.

b, 119-231. Timon's interview with the Senators, is, I believe, pure Shakespeare. The smooth flow of the lines and the definite concrete imagery speak for him. And we catch the unmistakable Shakespearian note in such passages as:

> —My long sickness
> Of health and living now begins to mend
> And nothing brings us all things.

or:

> Come not to me again; but say to Athens
> Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
> Upon the beachéd verge of this salt flood:
> Whom once a day with his embosséd froth
> The turbulent surge shall cover.

The action throughout is too vividly dramatic for Chapman. We miss the rimed morals with which he would have decorated such a scene and there are no valid verbal clews to his presence.

V, ii. This short scene hardly presents material enough to apply verbal or stylistic tests; but its business-like brevity and dramatic fitness seem to point to Shakespeare.

V, iii. This scene is universally rejected. I cannot find it in my heart to saddle it on Chapman. It seems rather the work of the reviser who wished to assure the audience that Timon was really dead.

V, iv. The last scene of all seems once more pure Shakespeare. Robertson cites a number of suspicious words, but on examination I find but one which cannot be accounted for. And one Chapman word does not make a Chapman scene. On the other hand I note various Shakespearian characteristics. The word 'scope' is used in l. 5 in the Shakespearian sense of 'limit' as opposed to the meaning 'aim' or 'object' required in the first Chapman passage. The dreadful pun

> By the hazard of the spotted die,
> Let die the spotted—
>
> (11, 34-5)

is truly Shakespearian. Chapman, too, was given to punning, but I recall nothing like this in his tragic scenes. The two contradictory epitaphs of this scene appear together in North's *Plutarch*. I can well imagine Shakespeare copying them both down and meaning to cancel one. I can not imagine him letting both stand in a final revision. Finally the quick movement, the vigorous dramatic dialogue of this scene stand out in sharp contrast to the former scene between Alcibiades and the Senate which we have assigned to Chapman. There is not a rimed moral in it except the closing tag. The tone, the atmosphere, of the scene is Shakespearian, a true Shakespearian tragic close. The hero has perished like Brutus or Hamlet; a secondary figure, less heroic, more practical, like Antony, or Fortinbras, remains to rule the world which the hero has lost and

to speak his epitaph. I can find nothing like this in the tragedies of Chapman.

Having completed our analysis of the play let us consider the result.

TABULAR VIEW

| SHAKESPEARIAN | NON-SHAKESPEARIAN |
|---|---|
| I, i, b, e, g. | I, i a, c, d, f, ii. |
| II, i, ii, a, c. | II, ii b. |
| III, i a, ii, vi? | III, i b, iii, iv, v. |
| IV i, ii a, iii a, b, c, d, f. | IV, ii b, iii, , e, g. |
| V, i b, ii, iv. | V, i a, iii. |

Shakespeare's hand appears in every act; in the earlier part his work is fragmentary and overshadowed by non-Shakespearian passages; in the latter part it predominates. I shall venture on an explanation of this later. Here I wish to call attention to the sharp distinction between the Shakespearian and the other scenes. Shakespeare's without exception are structural, they constitute the framework of the play—an incomplete framework, it is true. Let us review them.

Act I. Shakespeare introduces Timon and characterizes him. He brings in also the subordinate and contrasting characters of Apemantus and Alcibiades and opens the Ventidius action.

Act II. Shakespeare starts the movement against Timon and shows the hero apprised of his condition, but trusting in his friends for aid.

Act III. Shakespeare shows the ingratitude—tw[illegible] repeated—of Timon's friends, and sketches, at least, the climax scene where the hero turns upon them.

Act IV. Shakespeare dominates this act. He shows Timon's flight from Athens, the break-up of his household, his discovery of the gold and his use of it to promote human misery by gifts to the soldier, the harlot, and the thief.

Act V. Shakespeare dominates the last act. He shows

us Timon refusing all reconciliation with mankind and resolved to die alone, and Alcibiades revenging him on ungrateful Athens.

Furthermore, of the scenes which I have classified as non-Shakespearian only a portion can, I believe, be ascribed with any degree of certainty to Chapman. I would like to insist upon the fact that Chapman, not only as regards vocabulary, but in dramatic technique—or want of it—in faulty characterization, in grandiose and moralizing style, and, especially, in his trick of repeating favorite images and maxims is one of the most highly individualized of Elizabethan playwrights. It was comparatively easy for me in editing his plays to reject two which from the beginning have been ascribed to him—*Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*, and *Revenge for Honor*. It was no harder to separate in *Chabot* the original Chapman foundation from the matter superimposed by Shirley. And neither myself nor Professor Schoell found great difficulty in reclaiming for Chapman two anonymous plays, *Sir Giles Goosecap* and *Charlemagne*, or *The Distracted Emperor*. If, then, Chapman had a dominant share, particularly the original share in Timon it should be easy to recognize the fact. But for me, at least, it is not. Not only do I fail to recognize his presence in certain scenes which Robertson takes from Shakespeare to assign to him; but I am equally at a loss in other scenes which I agree with Robertson in pronouncing un-Shakespearian.

The only scenes in which I feel reasonably sure of Chapman are:—

1. The opening episode of the painter and the poet, which carries with it presumably their later lines in the same scene and their passage at the beginning of Act V. 2. The banquet scene in Act I. 3. The Alcibiades-Senate scene in Act III, and 4. The soliloquy of the Steward at the close of IV, ii and his interview with Timon in IV, iii. I do not deny the possibility of

additional Chapman matter. He may be responsible for ths scenes of Apemantus 'patter.' He may even, on the hypothesis I shall shortly advance, have added an occasional touch to some Shakespearian scenes; but I would like to assert with whatever authority my long study of Chapman and recent examination of *Timon* may add to my words, that I see no really convincing evidence of any larger Chapman element in Timon than I have here ascribed to him.

Now these Chapman scenes are not only insufficient in quantity but they differ in quality from the Shakespearian scenes. And finally they nearly all show signs, not of revision by a poet-playwright, but of ruthless and awkward cutting for the stage. It seems to me quite clear that such scenes are, by their very nature, secondary, and preclude the idea of a Shakespearian revision. For let us note, if we accept the hypothesis of Shakespeare's revision of a Chapman draft, we must conceive of Shakespeare's revising it so thoroughly as to have inserted, so to speak, a skeleton, a framework, into an invertebrate and formless play, and yet, a point of real importance, as having left the whole, in spite of this careful revision, the incoherent thing it is. Now I venture to affirm that this is not in the least in accordance with Shakespeare's methods as a reviser. Consider certain examples at various stages of his career. *Titus Andronicus* is now generally admitted to be a Shakespearian revision of an old tragedy of blood. Scholars differ as to the amount of Shakespeare's contribution, but agree, I think, that he left the fabric of the old play untouched, only throwing a veil of sentiment and poetry about its horrors. But this is the very reverse of what, on the hypothesis in question, he did with *Timon*. Later, in *King John*, Shakespeare used the old play as his scenario, so to speak, but rewrote the dialogue scene by scene. That he did not do this in *Timon* has been plain ever since the problem of this play was posited.

At the very height of his dramatic power Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*. As all the world knows, this rests upon an old play of the same name, but here Shakespeare completely transformed his source; in his hands the naïve, tragi-comic 'chronicle' became the most stupendous of the world's tragedies. Certainly there is no analogy here to his supposed revision of an earlier *Timon*. Finally, in the decline of his career he revised *Pericles*. Here we are on less certain ground, but the best opinion seems to be that Shakespeare let the first two acts of the old play stand almost as they were and that he practically rewrote the last three. It seems plain that Shakespeare's interest in *Pericles* was only awakened when he came to the story of Marina, the sea-born child, and that when it was awakened, he retold her story in his own words. If in *Timon* Shakespeare's hand was visible only in the last acts, and if these were almost wholly his, we would have a fair parallel to *Pericles*, and might assert that the character of Timon the misanthrope, like that of Marina, was Shakespeare's re-creation from an earlier work. But such is not the case, Shakespeare's hand is plainly visible in the first acts of *Timon*, and it is not continuous in the last. *Pericles*, then, like other Shakespearian revisions or reconstructions, presents no analogy to the hypothetical revision by Shakespeare of an older *Timon*.

There is yet another angle from which we may consider this hypothesis. The tragedy of *Chabot* has been shown to be an old play by Chapman revised for the stage by Shirley. The revision seems to have been fairly thorough; only three scenes, I think, are pure Chapman. But the underlying stratum is unmistakably his. Shirley has added a couple of new scenes, cut down some of the long speeches, and inserted from time to time bits of lively dialogue. The result is distinctly creditable. *Chabot* is not a masterpiece, but it is a quite coherent and acceptable play. Shakespeare, I suppose,

was quite as practical a playwright as Shirley, and if he had taken a Chapman play in hand for revision we might have expected him to make at least as good a job of it as Shirley did. But there is no comparison possible between the finished elegance of *Chabot* and the incoherence of *Timon*. Once more it seems to me that the argument by analogy runs counter to the hypothesis.

There is, moreover, a certain historical difficulty in the way of accepting this hypothesis. Shakespeare's work in *Timon* can be fairly accurately dated. It belongs to the period of *Othello* and *Lear;* there is not a trace of the new verse technique which first appears in *Macbeth* (*circa* 1606-7) and develops so rapidly in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare's revision of *Timon*, therefore, if we accept it, presupposes a play written by Chapman for the King's company before 1607. Now there is no evidence whatever to connect Chapman with that company at or before that date. After his apprenticeship with the Admiral's company, which terminated about 1600 (Chapman's name does not appear in Henslowe's diary after 1599), Chapman attached himself for a long and almost unbroken period to the Children's company, playing at Blackfriars, and to their successors, the Second Revels company at Whitefriars. So far as we know all his plays after 1599—with two exceptions, which I shall discuss presently—were staged by these players. And Chapman was hard at work for them during just the period when, we are asked to suppose, he submitted a play on Timon to the King's company. Seven comedies, one in collaboration with Jonson and Marston and the two-part tragedy of Byron fall between the years 1601 and 1608. And after the removal of the Children to Whitefriars, he wrote two tragedies and revised another for them. The two exceptions of which I spoke are his *Bussy* and *Cæsar and Pompey*. The latter play presents some difficulty. Chapman states in his dedica-

tion that it 'never touched at the stage'—*i.e.*, presumably that it was not intended for acting. But the elaborate stage directions show that it was printed from a playhouse copy prepared for the stage and the title-page of the second edition, published in 1653, nineteen years after Chapman's death, asserts that it was performed at Blackfriars. Now *Cæsar and Pompey* dates certainly after 1609, and if it was performed at Blackfriars after that date it must have been played by the King's company. This is the only evidence we have of any play written by Chapman for the King's company, and it is late and weak. Ascriptions of authorship and of performance on the title-page of plays published during the Commonwealth are notoriously inaccurate. We are on surer ground with Chapman's best known play *Bussy*. This was first played by Paul's Boys about 1607, and was later revised for his old company, the Chapel Children, then playing at Whitefriars, where Field took the part of Bussy, and finally came into the hands of the King's company, by whom it was performed as late as 1634, just before Chapman's death. We do not know the time when nor the circumstances under which *Bussy* was transferred to the King's company, but it probably came along with Field, who joined them about 1616. Field we know was intimately associated with Chapman. He had taken a leading part in nearly all of Chapman's plays from 1600 on, and the old poet in a copy of verses prefixed to Field's *Woman is a Weather Cock*, 1612, calls him 'his loved son.' After the death of his patron, Prince Henry, in 1612, Chapman, we know, found himself in sore financial straits, and it is, I think, a most plausible theory that his 'son' endeavoured to help him by establishing a connection for him with the prosperous King's company.

And this opens the way for my own hypothesis as to the origin and evolution of *Timon*. I suggest that Shakespeare began a play on this topic shortly after he

had finished *Lear*—say, in 1606. The connection, not only in style but in spirit, between this great tragedy and the purely Shakespearian parts of *Timon* is remarkably close. His sources were Plutarch's *Antony*, already familiar to him from his work on *Julius Cæsar*, and just possibly the old play on Timon. Shakespeare's knowledge of this play is so problematic that I prefer at present to avoid any discussion of it and to treat Plutarch as the sole source. Now Plutarch's account of Timon is interesting enough, but contains only the catastrophe, the loss of Timon's fortune and his subsequent misanthropy. It was the character of the misanthrope, I think, that attracted Shakespeare. Possibly he thought that Burbage would repeat his great success as Lear in a similar rôle. With this aim he began his work, and wrote in his best vein some of the great monologues of Timon in the last acts. But no succession of monologues will make a play, and Shakespeare turned to work up upon the basis of hints derived from Plutarch and possibly from the old play, an action leading up to the catastrophe. Such an action would involve the exhibition of Timon in his prosperity, the loss of his fortune, the ingratitude of his friends, probably also the repudiation by the state—the Senate of our play—of some claim of Timon's upon them—this idea may have been caught from Plutarch's *Coriolanus*—and finally some such development of the connection between Timon and Alcibiades, mentioned by Plutarch, as would explain the banishment of the latter and his attack on Athens in Timon's cause as well as his own.

In the Shakespearian fragments of the first three acts we seem to see the dramatist beginning work along these lines. We see Timon in prosperity, scattering his wealth 'unwisely, not ignobly.' His rescue of Ventidius prepares the way for the ingratitude of his friends. In two scenes we see his appeal rejected by former recipients of his bounty, and there can be little

doubt that he would have followed these by a climatic scene in which Ventidius turned upon him.

The theme of public ingratitude is by no means clearly developed, but there are certain indications which point to its presence in the master's mind. Timon demands 1,000 talents from the Senate on the ground that he has deserved it 'even to the State's best health': Alcibiades asserts that Timon's 'sword and fortune' preserved the State from hostile neighbours, and the offer, in the last act, of a dictatorship to Timon implies some earlier distinguished public service. What this was we do not know, except so far as it is implied in the reference to Timon's 'sword and fortune"; probably Shakespeare himself never determined it. The nature of the connection between Timon and Alcibiades is, unfortunately, left quite vague. Alcibiades appears in Shakespearian passages at the beginning and end of the play, first as the friend, then as the avenger of Timon. But the character of their connection and the reason for the banishment of Alcibiades was never worked out by Shakespeare.

It is possible, I think, to find a reason for the unfinished state of Shakespeare's *Timon*. The theme as given in all preceding versions, except the old play, of which Shakespeare's knowledge is uncertain, is incomplete. It presents a striking figure in an interesting situation, but it gives no satisfactory account of the development of the situation. To make a play out of this theme it was necessary to invent a number of incidents, and weave them together into a coherent plot leading up to the climax. That this was no easy task is proved by the failure of several more or less competent playwrights who endeavoured after Shakespeare to exploit this theme. Shadwell in the seventeenth, Cumberland in the eighteenth, and Bulthaupt in the nineteenth century, all essayed the task, and all without real success. It would be unfair, I think, to accuse these writers of

hoping to succeed where Shakespeare failed, for, as I see it, Shakespeare did not actually fail. He had marked out the way to success, and was proceeding along true dramatic lines, when he laid his work aside. Why he did so we do not know, but we may conjecture. Invention was not exactly Shakespeare's forte; he preferred to take his plots ready made. And the absence of any true plot in the Timon theme involved him in arduous and perhaps unsatisfactory labour. And we may well believe that after the gigantic effort expended on *Lear* and on *Othello* Shakespeare was not quite in his best form for such a task. It was while struggling with this difficult theme that there came to him the opportunity, perhaps even the demand to dramatize the story of Macbeth. Here was more appealing matter. Shakespeare threw aside his unfinished *Timon* and fell upon his new theme with an intensity and a rally of all his forces that shows itself, I will not say in every line of *Macbeth*, but certainly in the feverish ardour that animates it as a whole. *Macbeth* was the last great work of Shakespeare, his final dramatic masterpiece. After that he gave us two transcripts from Plutarch, two unfinished sketches, one revision—*Pericles*—and a group of romantic comedies. All are glorified by Shakespeare's matchless poetry and quickened by the presence of immortal characters; but not one shows his former power of combining, inventing and adapting incidents into a great dramatic whole.

It does not seem surprising then that in the period of exhaustion which must have followed *Macbeth* Shakespeare should never have resumed his work on *Timon*. His old creative energy was spent. New, perhaps more attractive, certainly easier, themes beckoned to him, and the unfinished *Timon* was neglected, perhaps deliberately abandoned. We have, I think, an interesting analogy to the unfinished *Timon* in the cases of *Henry VIII* and the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. I know, of course, that

some critics would assign the Shakespearian portion of these plays to Massinger; but as an old student of Massinger I am quite unable to accept their views. In the *Two Noble Kinsmen* in particular poetic-dramatic expression rises to heights that Massinger never dreamed of. Resting then on the orthodox view that Shakespeare left these two plays unfinished to be completed for the stage by Fletcher, what do we find? In *Henry VIII* Shakespeare's hand is visible in every act except the fourth, but he has nowhere more than two consecutive scenes; and he introduces several actions which he leaves incomplete, In the *Two Noble Kinsmen* the first and last acts are in the main Shakespeare's. He has started work on the second and third only to drop it; in the fourth he has at most a single scene. In all three he has left threads dangling to be picked up by his successor. We have a right, I believe, to argue from the condition of these plays to some notion of Shakespeare's method of work in his later years. He did not write out a complete scenario and proceed methodically to fill it in scene by scene; but worked intermittently, now on one act now on another, elaborating the character or the incident that at the moment dominated his imagination.

This, it seems to me, is exactly the case with *Timon*. What Shakespeare left behind him was neither a scenario, needing only to be filled in, nor a play complete, so far as it went needing only to be supplemented, but a thing of shreds and patches which only the master's hand was capable of weaving together into the fabric of a finished play. Neither Chapman nor any of his fellows could have performed this task.

It was not, I further suggest, until some time after Shakespeare's departure from London that the question of completing his unfinished *Timon* was taken up by his company. If this was at a time when Field was a member of their body, after 1616, there seems to me

no difficulty at all in supposing that Chapman should have been offered the job. Chapman's reputation as a poet and a dramatist stood higher then than it does now. He was a survivor of the great age; Shakespeare and Beaumont were dead; Jonson had withdrawn from the stage. Chapman's *Bussy* had come into the hands of the company, and was proving itself a drawing play, as it continued to be even after the Restoration. Field, who played the hero, would doubtless push the claim of his 'father' Chapman, and in the absence of Jonson what playwright of the day would seem so well equipped to finish a play on a classical theme as the venerable translator of Homer?

I suggest, then, that the unfinished Shakespearian manuscript was handed over to Chapman to finish for the stage. He would, no doubt, accept if only for the sake of the fee. But he was quite incapable of the skill required to complete the fragment along Shakespearian lines. Great as are Chapman's merits, his most ardent admirer cannot applaud his art as a maker of plots, and it is perhaps a harder task to complete an unfinished plot than to devise a new one. Nor is there any sign that Chapman set himself very seriously to the task. There is no evidence, I think, that Chapman ever took Shakespeare's work as seriously as Jonson did. Certainly his additions to *Timon* show little careful study of the fragment with a view to its harmonious completion.

Chapman wrote then, I take it, a fairly successful introduction, the Poet and Painter scene. He composed a scene showing Timon in his prosperity, introducing into it his favourite device of the masque, but blurring the characters and confusing the action. He brought in the new characters of the Fool and the Page in II. ii, apparently with the shocking design of connecting Timon and Alcibiades with the mistress of a bawdy-house, and this at the very moment of Timon's tragic

fall. He seems to have degraded the character of the cynic Apemantus into that of a scurrilous buffoon—scurrility was a Renaissance characteristic which Chapman shared with other humanists. He dwelt with special emphasis on the rôle of the faithful Steward, and he may have patched up several Shakespearian scenes. The most clamant deficiency in the draft, the necessity of explaining the banishment of Alcibiades, he filled up in his own fashion by a formal debate between that character and the Senate—not a bad scene, in its way, but marked by that reckless disregard of dramatic coherence which is so characteristic of Chapman. And with this he returned the manuscript and drew his pay.

One can imagine the consternation of such a body of trained actors and producers as the King's Men when they contemplated the result of Chapman's work. In the first place it is highly probable that his additions rendered the play far too long for the 'two-hours' traffic' of their stage. Nearly all the Chapman scenes show signs of heavy cutting. It is possible that one or more scenes carrying on the action introduced by the Page and the Fool were cancelled altogether. But this was not all. If Chapman had done too much in some places he had not done enough in others. He had omitted certain links and had not developed the climax scene of the mock banquet. In particular, a third scene, showing along Shakespearian lines, the crowning ingratitude of Timon's friends seemed imperatively called for. I suppose, then, that the manuscript as it came back from Chapman was thoroughly overhauled, cut down, and patched up by some third writer, possibly by Field himself, and was then equipped with the elaborate stage directions that prove it was prepared for the stage. Whether it was ever acted we do not know. Personally, I believe that a play on which so much trouble had been spent would have been given a try-out on the stage. But *Timon* in its final form could never have been

successful, and the reason is plain enough. It is a heterogeneous mass. Chapman's additions were bad enough, but the hasty work of the final reviser brought about a confusion twice confounded.

*Timon*, as it appears in the Folio, was no doubt printed from the play-house copy. This copy, as I have tried to show, consisted first of a Shakespearian draft, full and perfect in some places and broken and sketchy in others. It was then enlarged, possibly doubled in length by Chapman's additions, which would be inserted in their proper places. This enlarged manuscript then passed through the hands of a reviser, who cancelled and added, writing corrections and additions between the lines, in the margin, or on inserted leaves. One can imagine the state of the manuscript when it was handed over to the printer. But it is difficult for the ordinary reader to imagine the state of the first printed text without an inspection of the Folio. Diligent labour by modern editors has rendered *Timon* readable, though even to-day its inconsistencies spring to the eye. But it is hardly too much to say that the Folio text is almost unintelligible. I submit that this text, presupposing as it does such a printer's copy, does not accord with the hypothesis that Shakespeare revised a Chapman draft and turned it over to his company. Heminge and Condell tell us that there was 'hardly a blot in the papers they had received from him.' Their words, of course, cannot be taken literally, but no stretch of liberal interpretation can make them apply to such a manuscript as that of *Timon* must have been.

In conclusion I present for consideration two contrasting hypotheses, that of Mr. Robertson, namely, that *Timon* represents a Chapman draft revised by Shakespeare, and my own, that *Timon* consists of an unfinished play by Shakespeare, additions by Chapman and a revision by a third hand. I recognize that in cases like this, where external evidence is almost entirely

lacking and proof must be sought for in the play itself, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to attain real certainty. The best that can be expected is some degree of probability, and between two hypotheses it becomes the duty of the scholar to accept the more probable.

I submit that of the two my hypothesis carries with it a greater degree of probability

1. Because of the large amount of Shakespearian matter in the play, larger by far, I think, than Mr. Robertson is inclined to admit.

2. Because of the nature of this matter, its structural character and its analogy to the fragmentary, but primary, Shakespearian strata in *Henry VIII* and the *Two Noble Kinsmen*.

3. Because of the historic difficulty, no impossibility, I admit, of connecting Chapman with Shakespeare's company before 1607, the latest date at which Shakespeare can have written his *Timon* scenes.

4. Because of the nature of the Chapman scenes, their plainly supplemental and dependant character, and their patent incongruity with the original design, an incongruity easily comprehensible if Chapman were the second writer.

5. Because of the condition of the text, which seems clearly to preclude the notion of Shakespeare as the final reviser, and almost necessitates the hypothesis of a third hand to whose hasty, unconsidered work much of the present confusion is due.

One final word. If my hypothesis is accepted, it follows that Chapman's connection with Shakespeare's company so far as *Timon* is concerned dates after Shakespeare had stopped writing. Since the only other traces of such a connection are in the production by the Company of *Bussy*, probably after 1616, and their problematic production of *Cæsar and Pompey* at some unknown date, it would appear that there is no trace of this connection before Shakespeare's departure from

London. Consequently, I think, we should hesitate to accept the ascription to Chapman of a primary share in any play originally composed for Shakespeare's company. Each case must, of course, be met and argued on its merits; but I believe that in view of Chapman's steady activity and copious production of plays for rival companies from 1596 to 1612-13, there is at least an *a priori* objection to the view that he was habitually or even occasionally engaged in contributing plays or drafts of plays to Shakespeare's company, which have later found their way into the Shakespearian Canon.

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BY

ROMAN DYBOSKI, PH.D.

*Professor of English Literature in the University of Cracow (Poland)*

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A PAPER READ AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION AT KING'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, ON OCT. 27TH, 1922

BY

ROMAN DYBOSKI, Ph.D.

*Professor of English Literature in the University of Cracow (Poland)*

# RISE AND FALL IN SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC ART

## I

THE presumptuous foreigner, attempting to speak of Shakespeare's art to English students, must needs feel somewhat like Ulysses between Scylla and Charybdis. He is in danger either of being admitted to be right enough, but obvious, commonplace, tedious—nay, irrelevant—or of being found interesting, even original, but hopelessly wrong.

I need scarcely say that I prefer Charybdis to Scylla: I had rather be contradicted than ignored, and I shall certainly be happy to stand corrected, particularly in the matter of Shakespearian chronology, with which I may occasionally seem to be playing havoc. All I can plead in extenuation of my dealings with it, is a conviction that Shakespeare's plays, like the works of similarly productive modern masters, must have originated in his mind, and may to some extent even have been actually produced by his pen, in groups of more than one at a time—that, in a word, Shakespeare, at different points of his career, may have had two (or more) 'irons in the fire' simultaneously.

Another important reservation which must be made before I come to my proper task, concerns that wildly debated subject, the Shakespearian canon. Here I cannot possibly hope to be in agreement with a great many of my English readers. Of recent years there has been a movement towards what even a sympathetic critic described as the 'disintegration of Shakespeare,' and what is perhaps more strictly defined as a strenuous segregation of an apparently large mass of non-Shakespearian

matter in the plays from an apparently small kernel of Shakespearian work with the true golden ring of Shakespeare's poetry in it. Now the author of this paper happens to have received his early Shakespearian training under the influence of a great continental scholar, Professor W. Creizenach, the author of *Geschichte des Neueren Dramas*, the fifth volume of which (the last one the author lived to publish) carries the history of Elizabethan drama down to the end of Shakespeare's career (published 1916). Professor Creizenach, like many scholars outside England, did not think Shakespeare infallible as a poet, as some of his more fervent English admirers seem apt to do. I must freely admit that I, likewise, think it by no means unworthy of the genius of Shakespeare that he should—like so many other great modern poets of whom we know this for certain—have occasionally imitated the style of other writers, particularly at the beginning of his career.

Thus, while far from the exaggeration of German romantics, who foisted a large mass of notorious Apocrypha on Shakespeare, I confess myself content to rank with those who have recently been ridiculed as declaring: 'The Folio is good enough for me, thank you.' I certainly believe that Shakespeare had a hand in all the thirty-six plays of the First Folio, as well as in *Pericles*. So far there would seem to be little scope for sharp disagreement; it is only when we come to the 'how much' or 'how little' that greater differences arise. Nobody could deny that in the Shakespearian plays as we have them, there is residue, or dross, from older dramas worked upon by the poet. But, on the other hand, some weaknesses of the early plays at least can be interpreted as being due to the unsteady hand of a novice rather than to that of another author. Thus, some of the poor stuff of *Henry VI* might possibly be put down to the desire of a young author to emulate the popularity of Peele as a chronicle-history writer

rather than to the authorship of Peele himself. It is likewise possible to see imitation of the blood-and-thunder style of Kyd in *Titus Andronicus* and more successful imitation of the courtly wit of Lyly in *Love's Labour's Lost.* The star of Marlowe distinctly shines over two plays, *Richard III* and *Richard II*—and it has not quite ceased to fascinate the writer of two others, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merchant of Venice.* Nobody has dreamed of ascribing the two later plays to Marlowe: need we necessarily go to the length of believing any of the two former ones to be entirely, or mainly, by him?

And to pass from the beginning to the end of the poet's career: might not the noticeable changes in the tone, and even in the versification of some of the last plays in the Canon be considered as due to the weakening of Shakespeare's own hand with advancing years; may not the ageing man have yielded to the fascinating *stil nuovo* of fresh and successful younger writers like Fletcher? Did not Goethe, in a similar way, in his later age, come for a time under the spell of his younger contemporaries of the Romantic School?

Finally, as to the middle and height of Shakespeare's work, inconsistencies and puzzling brokenness in such plays of middle date as *Troilus* or *Timon* might be partly accounted for by temporary breakdown of Shakespeare's creative power under the strain of his greatest work, or to the peculiar conditions of the moment at which the plays were taken in hand by him.

The mention of fatigue as a factor to be reckoned with, brings me to my principal argument.

When engaged, about 1912, in the preparation of my Polish edition of Shakespeare, I once had the privilege to discuss Shakespearian problems with a distinguished English scholar, and happening to mention the traditional 'four periods' of Dowden's scheme of Shakespeare's development, I was met by the words: 'Oh! I am tired of those four periods.' This casual

remark suggested the endeavour to form a view of Shakespeare's poetic career which would embrace the whole of it under an aspect of stricter unity.

Such a view, in a sense, exists. Broadly speaking, we all certainly conceive the total of Shakespeare's work as a wave slowly mounting and growing in might, filling the ear with a world of varied music at its majestic height, and then grandly ebbing away, 'too full for sound and foam.' But this widest generalisation cannot give satisfaction to the more zealous student, enamoured as he is of the 'infinite variety' of Shakespeare's achievements. It is not as *a* wave, but as waves that he will be apt to see the work of the poet. He will notice rise and fall more than once in its course: he will be led to think of it in terms of an alternation of success and failure, of effort and exhaustion, of stress and pause.

This may be objected to at the very outset as an endeavour to 'make patterns' of a poet's career in a spirit of rigid determinism or doctrinaire mania for regularity. But it should be remembered that such an interpretation of any man's work in any field has a solid basis in a law of nature: even great geniuses, the most self-willed of all our self-willed race, are subject, as common mortals are, to the law of fatigue. Work and rest alternate in man's life as necessarily as day and night follow each other in the life of the earth. And work undertaken *invitâ Minervâ*, in a time fit for rest after a great effort, means temporary failure.

In his masterly study of the great tragedies, Professor A. C. Bradley observed a regular succession of great and insignificant scenes within each play—implying almost conscious relaxation after effort, like the succession of accented and unaccented syllables in human speech, which was noticed as an elementary rhythmical necessity by Professor Otto Jespersen. Professor Bradley furthermore observed, as a common feature of the four

great tragedies, a drag in the fourth act of each after the culminating dramatic effects of the third. This is usually masked by some lyrical or other *intermezzo*, or marked by absence of the hero from the stage: Ophelia's madness fills the gap in *Hamlet*, the Rodrigo incident in *Othello*, the Macduff episode in *Macbeth*, the Gloucester scenes in *Lear*.

It was tempting to extend this observation to plays considered in their entirety, and to their grouping. If we could succeed in establishing rise and fall as the rhythm of Shakespeare's whole poetic career, we might hope, in doing so, to catch the very pulsation of his creative mind, the throbs and pauses of the life-blood of his art.

## II

Such an attempt is made here. It must of necessity take the form of a cursory survey of Shakespeare's entire course of poetical production.

From the evolutionary point of view adopted in this survey, Shakespeare's poetical production very naturally begins on the low level of youthful incompetence. The fairly smooth if uniform versification of that Senecan school-exercise in tragic drama, *Titus Andronicus*, and of that Plautine school-exercise in comedy, the *Comedy of Errors*, in both cases shows a literary beginner's determined seriousness. There are flickerings of a great flame rising in the humanised villany of Aaron the Moor, and in the indomitable imperiousness of the crimeful Scythian Queen; similarly, some of the speeches, especially in the women's scenes, of the *Errors*, presage the sweet intoxication of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

These literary exercises may have been followed, for relief, by Shakespeare's most primitively boisterous farce, *The Taming of the Shrew*, that most unsophisticated practical joke of his dramatic career. In a summary, physical way the young poet here did away light-

heartedly with woman's free-will: it may be argued that he afterwards wittily chastised his own earlier self in this matter by eloquent pleading on behalf of women as an indispensable factor of social harmony in *Love's Labour's Lost* (iv, 3).

After his earlier effort in boisterous comedy Shakespeare may well have seen the necessity, for artistic self-discipline, of undertaking (to use his own words on a similar occasion) some 'graver labour.' Plays from English history being in demand and repute, we next see the young poet struggling with a disorderly mass of military and genealogical record in *Henry VI.* I do not enter into the vexed and difficult problems of joint authorship with regard to the different parts of this play; nor do I dismiss the plausibility of the argument that the 'First Part'—the weakest of all—was an afterthought, resulting in mere patchwork. Whatever may have been the actual chronological succession, nobody can fail to be struck by the marked success in dramatic handling of historical material achieved in the 'Second Part': the firm grouping of the jangling factions at the very outset, the symmetrical distribution of such outstanding events as the death of Duke Humphrey and the catastrophes of his two enemies, Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of Suffolk, the skilful insertion of anecdotal and folklore stuff (i, 4; ii, 1; ii, 3): all this contrasts very favourably with the panoramic breadth and chaotic profusion of detail in the 'First Part,' and with its greatest blemish—the unsteady and inconsistent treatment of the figure of Joan of Arc—almost as vacillating as the alternative heroic enthusiasm and cynical irony of *Troilus and Cressida.*

The success undoubtedly achieved in dramatic skill in the 'Second Part' of *Henry VI* is accentuated by another early victory in the field of comedy. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* rises above the other comedies of the earliest group: it contains, in fact, all the elements

of good Shakespearian comedy deposited side by side, if in a crude and unamalgamated state only: there is enough of romantic plot, witty dialogue, and amusing if irrelevant fooling here to make the play serve as a storehouse for repeated use in several future comedies, after Shakespeare's frequent custom of unscrupulously repeating lucky hits and perfecting them in the repetition. And coming splendours of Shakespeare's comic poetry cast their light before, in *The Two Gentlemen*, in such flashes as this, a fit *motto* indeed for all Shakespeare's early comedy:—

> O, how this spring of love resembleth
> The uncertain glory of an April day!
> Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
> And by and by a cloud takes all away! (i, 3.)

## III

Such was the first undoubted *rise* of Shakespeare's talent. It was immediately followed by as evident *decline*, due, it is true, to a sort of *vis maior* this time.

The Third Part of *Henry VI* is concerned with material more repugnant to effective dramatic treatment than almost anything that Shakespeare ever touched. He had to wind his way through a kaleidoscopic series of Yorkist and Lancastrian victories and defeats, in order to come to *Richard III*, and we see him struggling, with a sort of dreary disgust, through unmanageable and embarrassing matter, perhaps largely the work of other hands, with his eyes fixed on 'the valiant crook-backed prodigy': his coming hero steps forward several times out of the frame of the play to tell us what metal he is made of.

Here, then, temporary collapse of dramatic power was the unavoidable preparation for the pinnacle of early strength which we find reached in that perfect embodiment of Machiavellianism as conceived by the Elizabethans—the tragedy of *Richard III*. Under the

fascination of Marlowe's plays, with their strong light centred on the towering, isolated figures of Titanic heroes, Shakespeare has now realised that limitation of artistic ambitions to a circumscribed theme is a surer way to success than the folklore vagaries and crowded stage of chronicle histories in the manner of Peele. Marlowe, a typical child of the Renascence, was full of enthusiasm for the conception of a great man's power over others, overriding all barriers of law or dogma, and he had illustrated this, in his best work, by three strictly defined examples of power: by conquest (in *Tamburlaine*), by knowledge (in *Faustus*), and by riches (in *The Jew*). Shakespeare, following him, inspires the grandiose superiority of intellect and will in his hunchback with the same one pervading ideal of his aristocratic world, 'the sweet fruition of an earthly crown.' The recourse to conscious limitation in order to concentrate scattered strength, as illustrated by the solidity of *Richard III* after the diffuseness of *Henry VI*, becomes a favourite device of Shakespeare's: he repeats it, as we shall see, at several critical points of his career. But once again only did he write a play so whole-heartedly centred round one dominating figure as *Richard III*. *Coriolanus*, far away towards the other end of Shakespeare's course, with its pointed moral that even the greatest of us must bow to public opinion, gives occasion to measure, by comparison, the leagues and leagues of advance in moral judgment which Shakespeare travelled in life from his youthful drunkenness with the Renascence ideal of Titanic delight in unbounded power over men.

Drunk, indeed, with power the poet himself seems at the time—with the power he has gained over his audience—in that most glittering and playfully spontaneous of his first group of comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*. With the triumphant sense of attained security which it radiates in the form we have it in, it may well have come after such a solid achievement as *Richard III*.

In the easy-flowing harangues of Biron, who is so sure of superiority in worldly wisdom over his fellows, we seem to catch the poet's own voice, rejoicing in the possession of some knowledge of life, and in the sweetness of that knowledge as it tastes to most rising young men on the threshold of thirty.

Having drawn breath in such voluptuous fashion over early successes, the poet seems to have sunk to unproductiveness and uncertainty of touch once more about this time. And again, as in the Third Part of *Henry VI*, the fall may perhaps partly have been the work of external pressure. The closing of London theatres because of the plague, by severing for some time Shakespeare's contact with his dramatic workshop, may have deprived him of an assurance too freshly won to be constant in grasp.

In this season of his youth, Shakespeare is commonly supposed to have turned aside, for the first and last time, to production in *epic and lyric forms*. Here again the necessity of decline after a rise asserts itself palpably in the transition from the sensuous buoyancy of *Venus and Adonis* to the tedium of description, sentiment, and long-spun-out reflexion in *Lucrece*. Likewise, within the whole range of the *Sonnets*, that seem to accompany the poet through many a further year, we see the breath of inspiration coming and going: gems of imagination and feeling dwell side by side with unbearable conceits, and hardly ever is a genuine ring maintained through several sonnets in succession.

Returning—with the poet himself—to the sphere of drama, we find Shakespeare, after that pause in play-writing practice, perhaps at the lowest depth of workmanship in his whole career, in the attempt to open up another epoch of history in *King John*. The experience in grouping figures and arranging events, as displayed in the Second Part of *Henry VI*, has apparently slipped from him. The noble, simple figure of the bastard

Faulconbridge is indeed a prelude to the patriotic notes of *Henry V*, but a comparatively inarticulate prelude only. The Prince Arthur scenes—justly admired by Goethe—are indeed a pathetic, but a strikingly isolated episode. At the same time the bane of affected and pathetic style has beset the poet more heavily than it ever did, even in *Henry VI:* it mars such a powerful scene as the curses of Queen Constance upon the Monarchs.

And from this *nadir* of old-fashioned 'chronicle history,' Shakespeare soars at once—if our chronology be correct at this dangerous point—to the highest height of his poetic prime in the *Midsummer Night's Dream.* Unique of its kind in the whole range of Shakespeare's work for sheer beauty of imagination and melody, this dramatic poem is also unique for the originality of its varied, fantastic stuff among the works of a poet not generally distinguished by inventiveness.

*Romeo and Juliet* shares with the *Dream* the glory of presenting, in triumphant embodiment, all that is most worth living—and dying—for in 'the kingly state of youth.' As an apotheosis of love, and love only, the Veronese tragedy marks a return to Shakespeare's frequent device of limitation of theme for power of effect; compared with the rich, manifold and frail texture of the *Dream* it certainly attains in that sense its own peculiar excellences of depth and unity. Yet in this very concentration it bears the stamp of more conscious effort and less divine spontaneity. This is manifested by way of contrast to the originality of the *Dream*, in the large dependence of this work on a definite previous treatment of the story: nay, is not the very essence of the inspiration of this love-tragedy identical with the 'air and fire' of Marlowe's epic love-song 'Hero and Leander'?

Further, it may be pointed out that *Romeo and Juliet* fairly swarms in its early acts with, and is by no means free in its later ones from, affectations of style in the

vein of *Henry VI* and *King John:* the *Dream* keeps much more consistently clear of such weaknesses in the rapture of its lyric verse. This blemish of style, counterbalancing the grandiose solidity of theme, might be claimed as a new indication of lessening power.

## IV

HOWEVER, we now enter on a period of the poet's work in which it would seem less possible than anywhere else to trace an alternation of rise and fall. The difference between the *Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Richard II* and *The Merchant of Venice*—their probable next-door neighbours—is one between the 'fine frenzy' of the crowning hour of youth and the mellow and serene sunshine of early manhood—between possession with the spirit of poetry and conscious domination of the poet's mind over his material: it would be scarcely admissible, even if the chronological succession was clear, to speak of decline here. It is barely arguable that *Richard II* bears traces of it by its lapses into affected diction in its sometimes monotonous elegiacs, and rising as it does above its model, Marlowe's *Edward II*, it still no doubt remains one of Shakepeare's least original conceptions.

Similarly, and more highly, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* certainly rises above the crude elements that lay ready for the figure in that most monstrous birth of Marlowe's seething brain—the rich Jew of Malta. It seems more presumptuous than ever to detect signs of fatigue in the wondrous fabric of this play: yet the somewhat shiftless treatment of its interwoven plots may appear as a point of 'least resistance,' where weariness crept into the work. Shakespeare never cared much for 'plotting' or invention. Here he draws freely, for the first time, on his own early repertory of comic *motifs*—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. We shall find him again and again looking back fondly from the

heights of his mature work on 'the unsunn'd freshness of his strength,' and, surely, a man is most apt to do so at such stages of his onward journey as have an element of rest, of the breathing-while, in them.

As little resistance as is offered here to Shakespeare's familiar impulse of repeating himself, is offered to another tendency equally frequent with him: that of elaborating, beyond the limits of symmetry, such figures as fascinate him by their possibilities of purely human greatness and universality.

This structural fault—a *felix culpa*, indeed, in its monumental result—is indulged in twice in succession at this point of Shakespeare's career. Shylock, in growing under the poet's hands into the grandest type of Jew in modern literature, outgrows his proper place and function in the play. Falstaff in *King Henry the Fourth* does more: being 'not only witty himself, but the cause that wit is in other men,' he became perhaps the *spiritus movens* for his own author, too, making him write a Second Part to this play. The poet could not resist the temptation of giving his delighted public five acts more of this laughing philosopher's exploits and elucubrations; and in determining to do so, he involuntarily slips into largely repeating the whole frame of Part First. The First Part, with the rise and suppression of the nobles' rebellion, the wild youth of the Prince and his purification in heroic fight, was a finished whole. In the Second Part we are introduced to an aftermath of revolt, we see the Prince once more plunging into his riots and emerging into heroism; once more do we witness a *grande scène* between father and son in the middle of the play, and once more is the merry music of Falstaff the accompaniment to the same serious things. Repetition extends even to that music itself: in substance, and even in place, the Falstaff episodes are analogous to those of the First Part: a practical joke is played upon him in the second act, we see him

mustering recruits later on—he spoke of his soldiers in the First Part (iv. 2)—and we hear him wisely soliloquising on the field of battle towards the end.

Such dealing with a figure once visualized comes near to what Henry James, in a subtle criticism of contemporary 'naturalist' novelists' methods, expressively called 'squeezing the orange.' Shakespeare squeezed his orange for juice which was not in its real nature when he wrote, to command, of a Falstaff in love with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The countryside freshness which this otherwise unfortunate production breathes makes us like to think of it as written in a mood and season of recreation after the strain of the ten greatest acts of historical drama which it was Shakespeare's lot to compose. The relation of the comedy to the two great histories of *Henry IV* would, then, in our scheme of envisaging the poet's work, seem to be essentially the same as that of the *Taming of the Shrew* to more serious early labours, of *The Two Gentlemen* to the Second Part of *Henry VI*, of *Love's Labour's Lost* to *Richard III*, and finally, of *The Winter's Tale* to the graver dramatic romances of Shakespeare's last years.

In *King Henry V* we are on the ascent again, after the holiday trip to Windsor. The canvas of *Henry IV* had been somewhat panoramic and crowded, like that of *Henry VI:* again, as then (and as at many another time in his career), Shakespeare bethinks himself of limitation of aims as a narrow path to victory over exhaustion. He sets himself to show, not the all-round perfect king foreshadowed in Prince Hal, but a portrait of more circumscribed excellence in the sphere of military leadership and conquest, this being the sphere assigned by Fortune for Henry to shine in. Thus the poet produces in *Henry V* the one great war-song in the array of his dramas—his only properly patriotic play, designed to gladden for ever the hearts of his British countrymen rather than of all the world—his

one tribute of poetic worship at the shrine of purely national ideals. Within this narrow range he once more attains perfection, but it is a perfection not quite free from some of the defects of modern nationalist declamation, on which we surfeit in our days, and it is an unusually narrow range for Shakespeare.

Therefore, it is not contrary to the physiology of human effort underlying our present survey of the poet's work, that this almost perfect piece of patriotic pageantry should be followed by a step towards perfectness both higher and broader: we are once more in the golden glare of the sun that shines over privileged and other nations alike, in Shakespeare's ripest and most placidly unmixed comedy *Twelfth Night*. If that old tub of sinful flesh, Sir Toby, smells somewhat strongly of the same sack which Falstaff drank, if Sir Andrew Aguecheek is first cousin to Slender in the thinness of his figure, his mentality, and his affections as a wooer; these are only instances to show how excellent a thing happy repetition may sometimes be. However many devices may be hauled forth for use, in the plot of this play, from the old storehouse of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, we feel throughout, while moving in an atmosphere which unites romance and realism like almost nothing else in Shakespeare, that we are basking in the noonday sun of his comic art. We usually think, indeed, of a miraculous trinity of suns—like those in *Henry VI* (Part III, Act II, Scene 1)—as shining in this noon, and I, for one, am certainly as much dazzled as any admirer of Shakespeare, by the lyric gold that glitters through the shady leaves of the forest of Arden, and by the flashes from Benedick and Beatrice's sword-play of wit. But the point I wish to emphasize here is that the two other suns are no more so free from sun-spots as *Twelfth Night* happily is.

By lingeringly dwelling—in *As You Like It*—on the problematic figure of the sad cynic Jacques—however interesting this may be for studies in human nature, for

conclusions as to the spirit of the epoch, and for mere guesses as to the soul of the author—Shakespeare certainly appears singularly lacking, at such a brilliant moment of his career, in that artistic resolution, to which he has by this time accustomed us in his character-drawing: this curious ambiguity spells exhaustion, as the present writer reads it.

And there are more signs of exhaustion in *Much Ado*. We wade more than knee-deep in repetition here; we meet a coalblack stage villain of the most conventional manufacture, and, above all, we get entangled with unpleasant stuff, unfit for comedy, and hardly manageable dramatically at all in the later acts.

And from this we sink steadily to *All's Well that Ends Well*, boldly defined by Courthope as one of Shakespeare's weakest plays altogether. With a nervous persistence in the choice of subjects unsuited for comic treatment, Shakespeare deliberately turns to a theme closely resembling *Much Ado* in some of its least attractive moments. The hero here is as contemptible as the first lover there, and the 'comic relief' in the emphatically poor fun of Parolles certainly weaker than the very elementary humours of Dogberry and Verges. And if we reach higher upward in our comparisons, to Sir Toby as an off-shot of Falstaff, Parolles, who is another, falls into place as the last and faintest echo of Falstaff's wit in Shakespeare's art. True, the play contains broken bits of various sorts of excellence, even unusual, in their kind, in Shakespeare—the nearly solitary figure of a noble old lady, unique vistas of the poet's social thought in the unexpectedly democratic sentiments of a King of France, and an emancipated woman doctor who transfers us from Shakespeare's age into our own. Yet even this resolute heroine, like the rest of the actors, speaks the most intolerably tortured and convulsively strained rhetoric perhaps ever 'set down' by the pen of Shakespeare.

## V

WITH this decay of Shakespearian comedy we have entered the part of the field which is thickest with the weed of conjecture. There may be something in Mr. Bernard Shaw's witticism that Shakespeare, 'being forced to write popular plays to save his theatre from ruin,' dashed off several comedies, in succession, of the kind that the public liked best, gilding the first of them most fully, and the latter ones more intermittently, with the sunshine of comic and lyric genius, yet working half in contempt all the time, as he seems to indicate in titles like *What you Will*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado*, or *All's Well that Ends Well*—that, finally, he broke down in attempting to do the thing once too often.

Others have surmised an influx of personal grief, or the impression of painful public events, as making more plausible to our palate the passage from 'cakes and ale, and ginger hot i' the mouth' of *Twelfth Night*, to the 'wormwood' taste of *Hamlet*.

However the sober Shakespearian student may dislike to enter the pathless woods of elaborate biographical guesswork after George Brandes and so many others 'in wandering mazes lost'—yet it cannot be denied that some such hypothesis might help to make humanly intelligible that stupendous rush towards tragic excellence in the very midst of Shakespeare's comic period, which our dazed eyes witness in *Julius Cæsar*. Shakespeare, perhaps really bitten by some 'inward agony' when writing of the melancholy Jacques, may have thought to shuffle off a coil of purely *individual* trouble by intentionally turning towards *social* problems in his art, and seeking for them in the favourite Roman chapters of his well-thumbed Plutarch. And in making the effort, and even trying to grasp too much of Plutarch's riches at once, this first time he draws upon it, he is indeed not whole-hearted enough to produce a solid masterpiece of drama—the play is most puzzlingly

disjointed—but he is interested enough to burst forth into a majestic blaze of noblest public oratory in proudest verse, into a profusion of eternal truths on weakness of heroes and fickleness of crowds, on the tragic illusion of democratic leadership and the sacredness and vanity of revolution.

This strain of creative meditation on the great social issues remains strong enough in the poet's mind to tinge the dynastic drama of *Hamlet* with large-eyed criticism of rottenness in states—perhaps as Shakespeare's keen eye saw it in his own outwardly brilliant Renascence world. The same social interest gives universality of bearing to the personal ambitions of regicide Macbeth. It makes loyalty to the Venetian Republic the one permanent element in the stormed-tossed soul of Othello, and an element powerful enough for an entire great modern play, Browning's *Luria*, to be evolved from that *motif* alone. The same persistent social interest fixes on abuse of official power as the inspiration of *Measure for Measure*, and it deposits crystals of ripe statesman's wisdom in *Troilus and Cressida*, in such speeches as Ulysses' harangue on 'degree' as the substance of social order (i. 3). This lingering interest—a component perhaps too little regarded in the analysis of Shakespeare's great tragedies—is only absorbed finally in grapple with the innermost *moral* meaning of this human world in *King Lear*.

But the impulse is undeniably weakened long before *King Lear*, in the earlier masterpieces as compared with *Julius Cæsar*, which remains the supreme effort of Shakespeare's social thought.

Choosing Hamlet for his next hero after that Roman Hamlet, Brutus, Shakespeare evidently cannot help becoming personally more deeply enmeshed in the intricacies of the Prince's labouring soul, than he feels to be good for his work. 'Something too much of this,' in Hamlet's mouth, may be an occasional protest of the

poet's own artistic consciousness against the overpowering intensity with which he lived in the Hamlet theme (iii, 2); and Polonius' 'This is too long' is a just criticism of similar hysterics (ii, 2). Shakespeare perhaps was becoming aware at such moments of danger to poetic workmanship in the very humanity of his most commented work.

But the danger of human interest *versus* artistic control grew, even against the poet's will, and the dramatist's objective grasp weakened. Once more technical assurance was lessening through over-strain. *Measure for Measure* has sayings on death and on life which equal Hamlet's profoundest musings. Yet the very fact is significant that 'the best in this kind are but shadows' of the excellences of *Hamlet* and the extravagances of the 'poetic justice'—of which, as 'Q' has justly observed, there is plently, but which is sublimely humane and drastically crude by incalculable turns—are but the most glaring instance of the strange unequalness of this play.

The author's skill and his firmness of judgment are visibly gliding down the inclined plane in this play, as well as in its neighbour *Troilus and Cressida*, where the wreckage of majesty, and floating fungus of poisonous growths, jostle each other on a sea of dejection. We witness a spectacle of complete corrosion of artistic faculties: paroxysms of hate and disdain for humanity in general, and women in particular, alternate unaccountably with lucid intervals of noble heroic drama. A particularly noticeable symptom of the loss of artistic balance consists in what the late lamented Sir Walter Raleigh justly described as an 'aversion to the fact of sex' in these years of Shakespeare's life. Within the limits of a technical and literary view, which does not attempt biography, we may describe it as a temporary disability of the artist to see sexual relations in the light of beauty. This derangement of the poet's imagination bursts, like a putrid wen, into that flood of filthy

words and fancies which is Thersites. And what is more significant, Shakespeare himself blasphemously parodies here (iv, 2) the parting-scene between his own Romeo and Juliet (iv, 2). The cloacine filth of Thersites' language trickles on, in thinner flow, throughout the speeches and thoughts of Iago in *Othello*, who is infected, and would infect others, with the same inclination to dwell on the physically repulsive aspects of sexuality. Shakespeare himself seems to feel the ebbing remainder of this disposition as a disease of the mind when he weaves into the manifold wanderings of King Lear's thunderstruck brain a wild outbreak of disgust at nasty erotic shapes that irresistibly throng into his blurred mental vision, and make him call for 'an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination' (iv, 6). Testimony to the same effect is borne by some of the most feverish and outrageous of Shakespeare's Sonnets in dispraise of his perfidious yet powerful dark mistress; and here again, self-criticism resounds with trumpet tones in the grand 129th Sonnet, that searching, intuitive analysis of the workings of sexual passion.

Noticing the gradual loss of control over his own warring humours in the bitter comedies and in *Troilus*, Shakespeare may be supposed to have once more applied the tried remedy of confinement to a subject of narrow range: and he turned out, in *Othello*, one of the most clear-cut jewels of his art. Restraint as to the number of foreground figures, scarcity of events, and austere effacement of the fascinating political background: all this bears its fruit in reconquered power of sustained poetic flight, and the poet soars into long-forsaken, glowing skies of romance in the declamations of the chivalrous Moor. Width of moral outlook is also on the increase again, though, to begin with, it is manifested only in the highly involved mental physiognomy of Iago, most enigmatic of all villains, and not

in Othello and Desdemona, whose figures are conceived in a vein of noble but almost child-like simplicity, and in a manner too oppressively fatalistic for the freedom of the most perfect art.

It is surely very unsafe to establish differences in level of artistic perfection between the four greatest works of Shakespeare, which usually are thought of as not only singularly solid, but also marvellously equal in their excellence. However, a rise in artistic ambition, at least, seems to be observable from *Othello* to *Macbeth*: in Macbeth and his lady, as contrasted with Othello and Desdemona, there is no doubt more subtle and difficult complexity of character-drawing, and in place of the somewhat elementary fatalism of the Venetian tragedy there is greater daring of meditation on the fundamental problem of free-will. And the higher ambition is crowned by the success of masterful adaptation of all this complex psychology and philosophy to the exigencies of a perfect stage-play. Deservedly has *Macbeth* always reigned supreme among Shakespeare's tragedies in the world of the theatre, as his most effectively *dramatic* work, and that not by the opportunities only which it gives to the great modern actress in the part of the heroine.

As undoubtedly, again, does *King Lear* surpass *Macbeth* and the rest by its grandeur, in the sense in which the solar system surpasses the earth. Cosmic comparisons are habitual in speaking of a play where the two world principles of Good and Evil seem bodily at strife in persons of superhuman stature. The unusually crowded stage, the baroque edifice of a story over-rich in incident and detail, the 'varieties of religious experience' expressed in speeches which range from superstitious star-worship to challenge of cruel gods, and on to philosophical nihilism—all this together constitutes *King Lear* the mightiest effort of Shakespeare towards metaphysical synthesis in poetry.

## VI

It has often been observed that *Lear* leaves us with a deep consciousness of the value and vitality of good, but without the comfort of its ultimate victory. The outward pessimism of this conclusion powerfully striking the audience, its effect may have enticed Shakespeare into next turning up, in his Plutarch, the ultra-pessimist subject of misanthropy in the life of *Timon of Athens*, which had attracted his attention before, as allusions in earlier plays attest (e.g. 'L.L.L.', iv, 3, 170). 'And yet it almost goes against my conscience,' we seem to hear the poet muttering (like one of his villains): the feeling makes him fail, and perhaps even leave the work unfinished, a string of magnificent monologues. Possibly it was the worldly success which spoils, that made him unwary in choice and careless in execution. But more probably nothing uniformly powerful was possible after the huge labour of *Lear*. Most likely, too, here, as elsewhere, Shakespeare's manful nature strenuously revolted against a display of exaggeration and extremism in a picture of daily human relations. His sense of humour would of old have helped him to deal effectively with the absurdity of such discord, but that quality in him was under a cloud for a time, and therefore Molière's *Misanthrope*, whose humour is not lost in that very darkness of personal dejection, remains infinitely superior to *Timon* in playgoers' and readers' universal estimation as the literary type of the man-hater.

From *Lear*, in fact, no way could lead further up to broader outlook on life and more sublime abstraction. Shakespeare must have realized that after the failure of *Timon*, and once more we see him taking to his favourite device of seeking renewed vigour by limiting his subject to one great concern of our mortal existence. For the second time in his life he excels in writing of love, and love only. *Anthony and Cleopatra* is the 'Romeo and Juliet' of Shakespeare's later days. Besides illustrating

that fondness he has for looking back from heights of manhood on youthful effort, and rehandling its themes —the play also tempts the biographer by seeming so perfectly to fulfil Wordsworth's precept of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' as the condition of highest poetry. However, literary comparison alone is fertile enough here. No parallel, in fact, can show better than this one, between Shakespeare's early and his late tragedy of love, what gain for a great poetic mind there is in the bustle of a worldly, active, eventful life, like that of the playwright's in the Renascence capital of England. In *Romeo*, Shakespeare, swift as a lark and light as a lark, soars in song towards the sun of love in his early heaven. In *Anthony and Cleopatra* the full light of all a manhood's experience of great men and great women and a great epoch, is centred on a vision of love between two lordly human beings, filling a stormy age of history with its splendour. More truly a spectacle for the gods, this, indeed, than almost anything on Shakespeare's stage. The creator's own exultation over his conception seems to burst forth in Anthony's kingly words at the outset, where Rome dissolves, the empire falls, and kingdoms crumble into clay before the shameless glory of a pair who 'stand up peerless' with a subject world at their feet. The same triumphant exultation of the creator over his creatures rings through the scenes of their death, which becomes them no less than their life. Shakespeare himself seems to warn us, in Anthony's voice, not to lament or sorrow at the 'miserable change' of his end, since he dies 'not basely,' 'a Roman by a Roman valiantly vanquished.' And Cleopatra, in robe and crown, she alone after so many Christian heroines of the poet's, hears her lover's call from meadows of immortality as she opens the door of death, and the word 'husband' sheds its sacred splendour round the majestic end of a guilty love.

Dryden, in his new treatment of the theme, revelled

in the by-work of the story. But even Shakespeare himself did not shrink from entwining the statues of his two demi-gods with garlands of rich, picturesque detail: a scene of Roman wassailing is expanded with evident gusto into an *intermezzo* worthy of comparison with Dutch paintings, and from this, as well as from the complete and pathetic minor drama of Enobarbus later on, the master's mind comes back with a spring, swift and sure, to the main task.

Such royal freedom from pedantic economy in the technique of limitation had its dangers, and the broken structure of Act III, with its snapshot scenes of battle, certainly shows deficiency in firmness of hand, if only in that most impossible of dramatic tasks—a sea-fight on the stage.

Something more serious was to happen next. Shakespeare's approved method of conscious limitation of effort at critical points of his career turns out to be a two-edged weapon, when immediately used again in *Coriolanus*. The too laborious insistence on the towering isolation of the hero makes this, Shakespeare's last great tragedy, almost dry in its restriction to political ambition. *Coriolanus* is not unjustly the least popular of all the great plays: it took the solitariness of the deaf Beethoven to do justice in music to its grandeur. The drama is poor in colour when set against the Oriental glow of *Anthony and Cleopatra*. The rustic simplicity of republican Rome is no match for the Hellenist Court on the Nile, truly; but in *Julius Cæsar* there was a picture of a still simple Rome, too, and it was richer in variety.

At the same time *Coriolanus*, by its recognition of the deference due from man's conscience to the worth and weight of fellow men's opinions, marks a distinct reawakening of the social interest, which had been so strong at the beginning of Shakespeare's tragic period. We have seen that interest absorbed in intense preoccupation with problems of personal conduct. Here it

emerges to take ultimate form. The moral of the tragedy of *Coriolanus*, being the necessary homage of a superior man to the great fact of Society, is Shakespeare's own supreme moral triumph over the pride of genius. This excellence of *Coriolanus* is ethical rather than artistic; it is also, in its very maturity and conclusiveness, an excellence emphatically peculiar to advancing age. *Coriolanus* terminates Shakespeare's poetic manhood.

## VII

As if the poet felt himself that a period had come, and that a new, easier style, fit for declining days, must be sought, he tries his hand, smiling at himself, in this strange style by adding touches of his own to another man's work in *Pericles*, and so adorning that play for the benefit of his theatre. That new departure establishes the *genre* of 'dramatic romances' as the dominant manner of Shakespeare's declining years. The wilderness of adventure in this loosely-knit play was not shaped even by Shakespeare's hand into anything like successful application of this new style to drama of a higher sort. But Shakespeare, having found a style which suited his ageing condition, goes forward on this chosen way, manfully determined as ever, and soon reaches the sunset glories of *Cymbeline*. Here once again we feel, as we felt in *Twelfth Night* in the sphere of comedy, that everything has the absolute fitness, proportion and harmony of the mellowest fruits of spontaneously-working genius.

The strain which the sustained and rounded perfection of *Cymbeline* no doubt entailed, is relieved in *The Winter's Tale*, a true stage-manager's holiday in the fresh fields and pastures of the idyll. Some sense of dramatic responsibility, indeed, at first lingers in the attempt to make something like real drama of the subject of jealousy, so powerfully handled before in *Othello*; but this repetition proving a failure—perhaps

because the effort was not so very serious after all—the poet delightedly plunges into utter irresponsibility and lets dramatic consistency flow where it will, on the cooling ripple of romantic incident. He laughs, as from a far-off green arbour, at the gaping mouths of the London groundlings, when asking them to jump across sixteen years between two acts, or to behold a statue walking and speaking. And the verse, meandering rivulet-like with the fable, tinkles sweetly over its pebbles—a dramatic thunderer's lyric recreation, in 'the sweet of the year,'

with heigh! the sweet birds, O how they sing!

Here for once, repose and relaxation of a weary poet meant perfect achievement in its peculiar way. And the refreshment of this unbending made his great powers fit for reaching the crowning summit of dramatic romance in *The Tempest*. Cosmic in its greatness after the definable excellences of *Cymbeline* and the charms of *Winter's Tale*, it is the *King Lear* of Shakespeare's age. As that was the highest synthesis of his tragic philosophy, so Prospero is, by common consent, the herald of his testament as a beholder of this 'mortal coil' and looker into the haze beyond. In supreme earthly melody we hear suggestions of harmonies not fully conceivable by mortal ears. From *The Tempest*, as from *Lear*, there could be no step onward and higher, except 'into air, into thin air,' off the firm ground of stage, language, and material reality.

As if he felt that there were no further possibilities in this direction, Shakespeare turned, with a Virgilian *maiora canamus!* from dramatic romance, which had become so much more in his hands in that royal wedding gift of *The Tempest*, to his old field of history, where he had shone long ago. And of subjects from English history he this time—as if conscious it was the last—boldly undertook the very greatest: the whole

gorgeous pageant of the English Reformation, with its long array of grand figures, from the 'Scarlet Sin,' Cardinal Wolsey, and the patient suffering of Queen Catherine, to the Protestant personal rectitude of Cranmer. All this was to fill the stage together, and the popular figure of bluff King Harry was to stand in the midst of it all, translating into blustering English wraths and loves the Pagan Renascence worship of life and beauty.

The amplest ambition the poet had ever entertained in the field of historical drama, 'over-leaped itself.' Broken glimpses only of all he had set out to show, are presented to us, and the play, with its dances and trials, dreams and coronations, executions and christenings, remained the loosest procession of dilapidated scenes that ever came from the hand of Shakespeare; and whether he had a younger fellow-worker, or left it for somebody else to finish, or whether he himself lapsed fitfully into Fletcherian cadence in a listless way, the gigantic structure remains loose and disjointed in any case.

The burning down of the Globe Theatre during a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 has in it a symbolic irony of blind fate, and it was after the supreme failure of his loftiest and widest ambition in the field of historical drama that Shakespeare may well have deliberately laid down his pen with a consciousness that he had 'seen the best of his time.'

Πόλεμος πατὴρ πάντων. ('All things are born of strife.') The wise Greek saying may serve both as a summing-up, and a final justification, of our argument. We have endeavoured to behold Shakespeare's career in this rapid and no doubt occasionally faulty survey, as phases of the great struggle which is Life. In ever-renewed strife for full and flawless self-expression in his art, we have seen him droop, dissatisfied with himself, or tired and careless,

and we have seen him again and again start afresh, to seek in the choice of rigorously circumscribed themes a new way to regain lost power. And we have seen him do that once too often for unvarying and complete success. We have also seen moments of a rest which is success, and moments of a strain which is failure: so paradoxical is Life.

If we believe that whatever and whoever this Shakespeare may have been—stage-manager, capitalist, courtier, lover, what not?—the working-out of his artistic vocation was, throughout, the most serious and principal business in the world to him—then such a presentation of his work as attempted here stands freed of the reproach of dealing with it too much in terms of the literary workshop, and too little of the living man behind it all. For a great poet's work is his true life.

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# STUDIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOL IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

BY

OLIVE MARY BUSBY, M.A.

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*A Thesis approved for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of London*

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# STUDIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOL IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

## INTRODUCTION

Some talk of things of state, of puling stuff:
There's nothing in a play to a clown, if he
Have the grace to hit on't; that's the thing indeed:
The king shows well, but he sets off the king.

THE dramatic ideals expressed by the Mayor of Queenborough in these words are fairly representative of those of the Elizabethan playgoer in general. The popularity of the fool was one of the most striking features of the English stage at the time of its greatest glory. It can be proved over and over again from contemporary references, usually satirical outbursts from writers whose taste and sense of propriety were outraged by the intrusion of the buffoon into the sphere of serious drama, in flagrant defiance of classic precedent. These critics spent their strength largely in vain; the delight of the people in the clown [1] was, for a long time, at least, strong enough to prevail over academic criticism. Hall, Jonson, and others might satirize the taste of the public, but in spite of their sarcasms the fool remained for many a year in the popular estimation 'the finest man in the company'. How strong an attraction he exerted is proved by the stress usually laid on his rôle in the titles of the plays. It was not sufficient to advertise a piece as *A Knack to know a Knave*; special mention had to be made of 'Kemp's applauded Merrimentes of the men of Goteham'. Without a fool, unless some other powerful attraction was substituted, a play was liable to become 'caviare to the general'. And this the dramatists speedily recognized, and with but few exceptions they yielded to the cry of the playgoers, and gave them what they demanded, the more readily when they came to realize that 'to intermingle merry jests in a serious matter' is no

[1] The terms 'clown' and 'fool' will be used synonymously in this study, as is generally the case in the plays themselves.

'indecorum', but rather a more faithful representation of nature than drama that is wholly comic or wholly tragic.

Whence came this insistent demand of the English public for the buffooneries of the fool? In the case of the earliest forms of drama one reason is obvious. Mysteries and Moralities were edifying, no doubt, but the latter in particular must frequently have become wearisome, especially to the less devout members of the audience; therefore the Devil and the Vice were introduced to provide a little diversion in the form of buffoonery, always dear to the uncultivated mind, and conspicuous in every form of popular drama. This development, however, was by no means peculiar to England. It was directly paralleled, as will be shown later, by the introduction of a fool into the French Mysteries. Doubtless, too, the stage fool satisfied another want—the desire of the public for a satirical commentary on the life and events of the times, now largely supplied by 'Punch' and his lesser brethren, but then impossible except under the protection of the cap and bells. But this function, again, cannot be regarded as the chief source of the peculiar love of the English people for the fool. In England he played a much more prominent part in the history of the drama than elsewhere, for there he enjoyed not only a far longer life but also a far wider range and licence than in other European countries, where he had no such recognized entrée into serious and even tragic drama. It seems, therefore, as if the extraordinary vogue of the English clown must have been due to some quality inherent in the English nature. Such a quality undoubtedly exists, but its nature is easier to illustrate than to define. It is that same instinct which prompts the Englishman to take refuge in a joke whenever he feels in danger of appearing unduly sentimental or serious, and to jest in the face of misfortune, peril, or even certain death. The close blending of comedy and tragedy characteristic of the Elizabethan drama was being paralleled daily five years ago in the almost incredible stories from our trenches and battleships—stories at which we laughed irresistibly, but with a lump in the throat.

And as delight in the stage fool was a particularly English taste, so too the fool himself, in consequence of the importance of his part upon our stage, and the care bestowed upon it by our dramatists, acquired an essentially English character. The French fools mentioned above are in the main conventional jesters, and we do not feel that they are French in the same way that the English clown, in spite of the variety of influences which seem to have been at work in his development, is English. His distinctive character was

evidently recognized in other countries. From the time that English players began to visit Germany,[1] we find constant references to 'John, the English clown', not only in connexion with the English actors but also in the titles of German plays, into which, owing to his great success in Germany, the clown was introduced. Such a play is Ayrer's *Tyranny of Queen Gout*, where a prominent character is 'Jahn Klan, der engellendisch Narr'.

What then was this famous 'English clown'? Everyone knows what Shakespeare's fools are, and knows too that they represent the very consummation of clownage. But they are too often regarded as separate growths, independent creations of Shakespeare's genius, instead of being considered in relation to the host of fools who exist in the works of other Elizabethan dramatists—fools who are often worthy of consideration for their own merits, and always as showing the general development of clownage. The object of this study, then, is not to deal with Shakespeare's clowns in themselves—that would be superfluous labour—but to take the *average* Elizabethan clown, to trace his origin and the lines on which he developed, both as a dramatic and as an individual character. And in the course of this process, the fact will, I hope, incidentally appear, that Shakespeare's fools are no independent growth, but have their place in the regular succession of stage merry-makers, owing much to their predecessors, and in their turn handing on the tradition, infinitely enriched, to their successors. Yet this comparison of Touchstone and his brother fools with the less noted Elizabethan fools (a comparison which cannot always be made formally, but will continually be kept in view) should at the same time show more vividly than ever how infinitely, in clownage as in all other respects, Shakespeare's genius transcended that of his rivals. Good clowns, as it will be seen, are not lacking in the works of other dramatists, but not even the best of them can approach Lear's fool, Touchstone, Feste, or even Bottom. Apart from their inferiority in wit and humour and in dramatic importance, they have another constant weakness—they are rarely more than clowns, whereas Shakespeare's fools are human beings. If these points are brought out in this study, it will not have failed of its purpose.

[1] About 1590. See Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*.

# CHAPTER I

## THE ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH STAGE FOOL

'STULTORUM numerus infinitus est.' This, the favourite text of the mediaeval satirists, also describes one prominent feature of mediaeval life. For the fools of the Middle Ages, if not exactly infinite in number, at least formed a goodly host, and were by no means confined to any one part of the life of the times. The courts and great households had as a matter of course their professional fools; the church had its Feast of Fools; Fool Societies carried on the tradition of the Feast in secular life; and literature had its 'Ship of Fools' and many other writings of a similar type. Hence it was only natural that when the mediaeval drama arose the stage too should have its fool. Moreover, since the fools of the day were so varied, it was natural that the stage buffoon, being subject to so many influences, should be of a distinctly complex character; and this is undoubtedly the case. The difficulty in dealing with his origin is not to find possible sources—of these there is no lack—but to decide what part each played in determining his character. It may be admitted at once that the complete performance of this task is impossible. Many of the stage clown's comic devices are part of the common stock-in-trade of merry-makers of all ages—crude and boisterous horse-play, coarse personal satire, gibes at women and love, and the like—and in the case of other characteristics it is impossible to decide from which of several likely sources they were drawn. All that can be done here is to indicate each of the various possible sources of influence, pointing out any characteristic which seems to have been derived from that source rather than from any other. The use which the English stage fool made of these characteristics will be described more fully later; the object of this chapter is rather to show what influences were at work during his development, and how they operated.

The oldest of these influences is probably that exerted by those strolling 'variety entertainers', called variously joculators, jugglers, jongleurs, and many other names, who wandered all over Western Europe in the Middle Ages, earning a precarious livelihood by their performances in the various towns and great houses. For these

jongleurs appear to have been the mediaeval successors of the buffoons of the Roman drama in the time of its decay. With this question in general it is not necessary to deal at length here, since the evidence, consisting mostly of attacks on the stage and, later, of attacks on the minstrels or joculators, has already been collected more than once.[1] Fragmentary as it is, almost certainly there emerges from it the fact that the jongleurs combined in varying proportions the qualities of the honoured bard of Germanic times and the coarse and licentious buffoons of the later Roman stage, often adding to these, acrobatic and other tricks acquired from other strolling entertainers of the Middle Ages.

Proof is not wanting that performers of this type found their way to England at an early date. In the eighth century we find the beginning of a series of clerical attacks on the once-revered 'scop'—attacks which are not justified by anything in his poetry, and can only be explained by the supposition that the type had become debased by the influence of performers of a lower class. This hypothesis is supported by the confusion of nomenclature in Anglo-Saxon glosses and vocabularies, where such different terms as 'mimus', 'comicus', 'joculator', 'cantator', 'poeta', are impartially translated as 'gligmon' or 'scop'.[2] In all probability the intercourse between England and the Continent in ecclesiastical matters was largely responsible for the early introduction of the jongleurs into England, but doubtless this invasion became much more considerable after the Conquest. We hear, for example, of the importation of 'joculatores' by William Longchamps. That there was a great number of entertainers of various kinds in England by the twelfth century is evident from John of Salisbury's attack on 'mimi, salii vel saliares, balatrones, aemiliani, gladiatores, palaestritae, gignadii, praestigiatores, malefici quoque multi, et tota joculatorum scena.'[3]

It is possible, therefore, to trace the origin of the English nomadic buffoons of the Middle Ages to the Roman mimes, but it is a more difficult matter to determine the exact nature of their influence upon the stage fool, since our knowledge of the nature of their performances is unfortunately extremely vague. In the first place it is necessary to differentiate between the various types of jongleur, as does Thomas of Cabham in his attack in his *Penitential*.[4] Obviously any influence exerted by the jongleurs upon the clown must have come from those

[1] See Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. i; also Mantzius, *History of Theatrical Art*, vol. i, for the Roman buffoons.

[2] Wright-Wülcker, *Latin and Anglo-Saxon Vocabularies*.

[3] *Polycraticus*, i. 8 (*c.* 1156).

[4] Thomas died in 1313.

classes which Thomas condemns—'Quidam transformant et transfigurant corpora sua per turpes saltus et per turpes gestus . . . vel induendo horribiles larvas . . . Sunt etiam alii qui nihil operantur, sed sequuntur curias magnatum et dicunt opprobria et ignominias de absentibus ut placeant aliis.' From other accounts we gather that jesting formed an important part of these entertainments, and it is easy to see that a performance including dancing, gesture, and masking, accompanied by jests, might easily develop into something of the nature of drama.

There is unfortunately no certain proof as far as England is concerned that the performances of the jongleurs ever took definitely dramatic form; but there are several pieces of evidence that this was the case in France,[1] and in view of the close intercourse between the two countries, it seems fairly safe to extend the application to England. And the absence of undoubted traces of plays given by jongleurs in England in no way proves that those plays did not exist, for such rude, unliterary pieces, largely improvised, and often, probably, never written down, would only survive by accident. The Roman mimes were essentially players of farces, and it seems unlikely that their successors, the jongleurs, dropped this form of entertainment altogether during the Middle Ages, particularly as they took it up again later. When the regular drama arose and the better class of minstrels decayed, the buffoons preserved themselves by becoming actors too, and these travelling companies of 'players of interludes', as they were now called, survived throughout Tudor times.

It seems likely, though there is not much evidence to prove it, that the important part of comedian in the religious plays given by the amateur performers of the guilds, was sometimes filled by one of these professional jesters. Gringore's friend, Pontalais, a popular strolling actor, was hired in this way to play the fool in the French mysteries; and in the records of Bungay we find a payment to a 'vice' in 1558 for 'pastyme' before and after plays which seem to have been Miracles.[2] If such was the case, the descendants of the Roman mimes were our first stage fools. Probably, too, the strolling buffoons sometimes took part in the performances of the Fool

[1] There are references to plays given by jongleurs, e.g. at Abbeville (see Louandre's *History of Abbeville*), and several rudimentary farces survive, e.g. *L'Enfant et l'Aveugle*. The fragment known as the *Interludium de Clerico et Puella* may possibly have formed part of a farce played by the jongleurs in England. On French jongleurs see Faral, *Les Jongleurs en France au Moyen Age*.

[2] Churchwardens' Accounts for Bungay Holy Trinity.

Societies, of which more will be said later. But in any case the jongleur undoubtedly exercised an influence on the English clown, in that by his performances—his singing, dancing, and tumbling feats accompanied by crude patter and coarse jokes—he established a tradition of comic acting before the rise of the literary drama.

In this he was assisted by a closely-connected personage—the court or domestic fool. Enough has been written on this subject to render any detailed account superfluous here, but it may be said by way of reminder that the fool, either natural idiot or professional jester, was an institution in courts and great households long before the rise of the written drama in England. (Some, indeed, would trace a connexion between the Teutonic 'þyle' and the court fool.) Hence, since he continued to flourish in England until Commonwealth times, he was a well-known figure in society throughout the whole period of the Elizabethan drama, and it was inevitable that he should play a prominent part in the development of the Elizabethan stage clown.

One way in which his influence was exerted has already been indicated—the establishment of a tradition of comic acting. As Mr. Symonds has said of the court fools, 'The occasional and extemporaneous jesting of these men passed by degrees into settled types of presentation. . . . When formal plays came into fashion by the labour of the learned, these professional comedians struck the key-note of character.' It was natural that dramatists, especially court dramatists, should in sketching their buffoons draw their inspiration largely from fools with whom they were so well acquainted. And it was not only in the households of monarchs and nobles that the fools were known. The court fools at least were public personages. They accompanied the king on his progresses, and the frequency with which rewards to them are mentioned in town records suggests that they played a somewhat important rôle on these occasions. Their jokes are quoted and their tricks described in contemporary writings, and their names seem to have been household words.

Moreover, the court jesters often came into close connexion with the stage. It is clear from extant records ranging from Henry II's reign to Elizabethan times that they frequently took an active part in court revels—mummings, masques, and the like.[1] In the time of the Tudors there was a distinct dramatic element in these revelries, and regular plays were beginning to form part of them, so it is

[1] See *Losely MSS.*, ed. Kempe.

possible that sometimes the court fool became for the nonce a stage fool. In any case, this connexion with the stage is significant.

It appears that the court and domestic fools began to influence the stage clown in the earliest stage of his existence—that is, while he was represented by the Vice. Some critics altogether deny the connexion of the Vice and the domestic fool, or at least date it very late, when the Morality was in process of decay.[1] This question is part of the larger problem of the essential nature of the Vice, which will be discussed more fully later, but that part of the problem which relates to the domestic fool must be considered here.

In the earliest extant Morality, *Pride of Life*,[2] which probably dates from about 1400, the character Mirth or Solas, in whom we may perhaps see the germ of the later Vice, strongly suggests the court jester, though an unusually active one. He is the king's professional merry-maker, as well as his messenger, beloved by his master for the amusement which he provides. The king says of him:

Mirthe and solas he can make
And ren so the ro;
Lightly lepe oure the lake
Quher-so-ever he go;

and he remarks himself as he runs off gaily singing:

I am Solas, I must singe
Over al quher I go.

It may be objected that such a doubtful character as Mirth is no proof, and as so few plays of the fifteenth century have been preserved, it is difficult to find early corroborative evidence. But a strong piece of such evidence may be found in Skelton's *Magnificence*, dating from the beginning of the next century, for Fancy and Folly, though they both play a prominent part in leading Magnificence astray, also bear unmistakable resemblances in many respects to the domestic fool.[3] Allusions to various parts of their dress prove fairly clearly that they wore the conventional garb of folly, and Fancy's falcon and Folly's mangy dog would be suitable and natural appurtenances of domestic fools. There are some hints, too, that Fancy is a dwarf—another suggestion of influence from the 'allowed' fool; and both he and Folly indulge in favourite fool's tricks, such as inconsequent answers and nonsense rimes. Moreover, the two characters are differentiated, apparently representing the two types

[1] e.g. Cushman, *Devil and Vice in English Literature before Shakespeare*.

[2] Ed. Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*.

[3] For a full discussion of Fancy and Folly see Ramsay's edition of *Magnificence*: Introduction.

of fool. Fancy, although the moving spirit in the intrigue, strongly suggests the natural fool, for he is generally acknowledged even by himself to be weak-witted. Folly describes him rudely:

> Thou art so feeble-fantastycall,
> And so braynsyke therwithall,
> And thy wit wandrynge here and there,
> That thou cannyst not growe oute of thy boyes gere:

and this description is justified frequently by Fancy's behaviour, as when he makes tactical blunders in dealing with Magnificence, or lets Folly cheat him. Folly, on the other hand, seems to represent the professional jester. His part in the plot is to keep the prince amused. He is far shrewder than Fancy, whom he cheats in their chaffering over the dog, and he is quick at repartee. Many epithets suitable to the artificial and natural fool respectively are applied to him and Fancy.

The influence of the domestic fool appears again in Heywood's Vices, the first personages so called. Mery Report, in particular (in *The Play of the Wether*, 1534), is a merry-maker pure and simple, bearing a strong resemblance to the court jester. He enters Jove's service as usher, and jests with all the suitors who come to the court. Apparently, too, he wears fool's dress, for Jove objects at first to his 'light behaviour and array'.

No other undoubted Vices bear such definite resemblances to the domestic fool as do Heywood's, though the presence of the jester Hardy-Dardy in *Godly Queen Hester*, written before 1561, is suggestive. But the commoner type of Vice also has tricks reminiscent of the professional jester—inconsequent answers, quibbling, and the like. It may be noted, too, that in order to lead mankind astray, the Vice frequently enters his service, and becomes, not his fool, perhaps, but at least his Master of the Revels, and in some degree his jester.[1] In view then of the fact that the earliest Vices so called are strongly reminiscent of the domestic fool, and of the occurrence of such characters as Fancy and Folly and Hardy-Dardy, also of the fact that comic devices used by these personages constantly recur in the rôles of other Vices, it seems safe to conclude that the court or domestic fool was from the first largely instrumental in determining the character of the Vice.

In the regular drama, curiously enough, the domestic fool proper is a comparatively rare figure. Apart from Shakespeare's fools there are barely a dozen examples in the whole of the Elizabethan drama.

[1] e.g. Sensual Appetite in *The Four Elements*.

But in many cases it is difficult to distinguish the clown-proper from the domestic fool; and this likeness, which renders classification difficult, proves that the conventional stage clown must have inherited a good deal from the domestic fool. The nature of this inheritance will be described more fully in a later chapter. One prominent feature of it is the close personal connexion between fool and master, so characteristic of Shakespeare's fools. It is where we see this personal attachment, where, as in the case of some of Thomas Heywood's clowns, we see the servant following his master's fortunes throughout the play, often grumbling at his hardships, real or imagined, offering cynical comments on the situation, and jesting in and out of season, but often, too, conveying sound advice in his jests, and sometimes showing true devotion—it is there that we may assume with certainty the indebtedness of the clown in question to the domestic fool.

And still more than in the case of the Vice, in the regular drama some of the clown's tricks seem to owe their origin to the professional jester. Doubtless some of these were handed down from the Vice, while others were derived directly. The clown's love of quibbling and playing at cross-purposes, a favourite trick of the all-licensed domestic fool; his high opinion of his importance, a natural characteristic of so popular a personage as the court fool; his habit of referring to his wisdom in comparison with others' folly; his quaint names, often those of animals or common objects, with which may be compared 'John Goose, my lord of Yorkes fole'[1], all these points, and probably others, too, indicate the influence of the professional fool. The question of influence in dress will be discussed later.

One other point which appears suggestive is the fact that the stage fool disappeared at about the same time that the custom of maintaining domestic and court fools fell into decay. This point, however, must not be over-emphasized, since the clown had begun to lose favour on the stage while the fool was still an institution in the court and the mansion.

So much then for the professional fools. But these were not the only class to don the mask of folly. There were also the amateur merry-makers of the Feast of Fools and the Fool Societies which carried on the traditions of the religious festival; and these, too, had their share in the development of the English stage clown. Besides doubtless helping to suggest and popularize the introduction of the fool on the stage, they left several distinct traces on the rôle. The

[1] *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, ed. Nicolas, p. 2.

most characteristic of these was that left by the 'sermons joyeux', those ridiculous medleys of mock-pious exhortations, learned allusions and scurrility, full of dog-Latin and religious tags, which, originating in the mock services of the Feast of Fools, later played a prominent part in the performances of the Fool Societies, who delighted to parody both the religious sermon and the rhetorical disquisition of the schools.[1] Of the formal 'sermon joyeux' there are but two examples in the English drama—that delivered by Folly at the close of the 'Satire of the Three Estaits', describing various classes of fools, and the discourse of Herod's fool in *Archi-Propheta*,[2] based nominally on the opening verses of Genesis, but in reality consisting of a disquisition on folly and satire of society, particularly women. It concludes:

> Quid est Patriarchus? Patriarchus. Et quid est
> Morio? morio. Quid foemina? quid? nisi fatua.
> Et spiritus Domini motus per aquas fuit.

But the 'sermons joyeux' had a wider influence than this, as will be shown later. Crude and coarse as these effusions often were, they contained the germ which was to develop into the delightful mock-learned disquisitions or soliloquies of the best of the Elizabethan clowns.

Another form of entertainment characteristic of the Fool Societies which seems to have influenced stage clownage in some measure is the 'sottie'. It is useless to look for much influence as regards characterization from the fools of these plays, for they are usually only types. As Julleville says, 'Le sot . . . symbolise l'homme en général et les grands en particulier, abandonnés à la bêtise et au vice qui sont au fond de nos instincts. Pour les représenter dans tous leurs rôles, le fou n'est jamais lui-même; il est tour à tour roi, pape, etc. . . . et toujours fou sous ses divers costumes.' Influence upon the clown is rather to be sought in the general characteristics and the underlying idea of the 'sottie', an idea parallel to that which inspired the Feast of Fools—the conception of the whole world given up to the service of Folly. In all probability this was largely instrumental in making the clown a vehicle for satire, for the 'sottie' was in its very essence a satire of society. A typical example is one which ends with the resolve of the World to cease to attempt to set himself right, and to yield unreservedly to Folly. Political satire is also sometimes found, as in *L'Astrologue*. In the Middle Ages liberty of speech could only be enjoyed under the mask of folly, but under that mask it was complete; and the 'sottie' introduced this liberty upon the stage. The social satire which is so freely uttered by the English

[1] For examples see Leroux de Lincy's collection.

[2] Grimald, *Archi-Propheta*, ii. 9 (1547).

clowns, such as Pompey's court, camp, city and country 'news', or political satire such as that of the jigs, is often sufficiently reminiscent of the manner of the 'sotties' to suggest influence from that source.[1]

It has also been pointed out that the chop-logic of Heywood's interludes, which is the forerunner of the rough wit-combats of the Elizabethan clowns, may owe something to the dialogue of the 'sotties'. Another point which may have some bearing on the clowns' style is the number of proverbs and 'dictons populaires' found in these plays—sometimes in very large numbers, as in *Les Menus Propos*.

It will be noticed that the 'sotties' mentioned above are all French. It seems likely that the influence exerted by the Fool Festivals and Fool Societies on the English clown came largely by way of France, for neither the religious nor the secular revels appear to have prevailed at all generally in England. There are a few references to the Feast of Fools during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but apparently the attacks which they represent[2] were soon successful, for after 1391 we hear no more of the Feast, though references to the allied festival of the Boy Bishop continue until the sixteenth century. And of the Fool Societies there is hardly a trace;[3] therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that they can never have obtained any vogue in England. But in France the Feast was not definitely suppressed till the middle of the sixteenth century, and the Fool Societies flourished throughout the whole period of the rise of the Elizabethan drama. In view, then, of the constant intercourse between England and France, it seems possible that the influence of the Feast of Fools upon the English clown operated largely through the 'sociétés joyeuses' of France.

This hypothesis would help to explain the resemblances which exist between the English clown and the fool who appear in several French Mysteries, dating from the middle of the fifteenth century. In some cases it is impossible to form any clear idea of these French fools, but in at least one Mystery, *St. Didier*, performed in 1482, we find a well-developed jester, worthy as regards the quality of his humour to rank with English buffoons of a later date. But though direct interaction between these fools and the English Vice is possible,

[1] For 'sotties' see Picot's collection.

[2] e.g. Statutes of Arundel for the Government of Beverley Minster, 1391 (Poulson, *Beverlac*, p. 592).

[3] Practically the only trace is a mandate of Bishop Grandisson in 1348 to the Dean of Exeter and Rector of St. Paul's, commanding the prohibition of a certain disreputable society known as the 'Order of Brothelyngham'.

it is hardly necessary to suppose it. Most of the common characteristics are the conventional qualities of buffoonery in all ages; and a noticeable point of difference between the French fool and the Vice is the absence of any attempt to connect the former with the main action of the play. Possibly, therefore, the resemblances between the English and French merry-makers were the result of parallel development. Almost certainly the fool came into the French mysteries from the Fool Societies, and it is not difficult to imagine how that development took place, as it appears that after the secularization of the religious plays, the 'sociétés joyeuses' sometimes joined forces with the graver societies who produced the Mysteries to give joint performances. If, then, the French Fool Societies also influenced the English clown, up to a certain point there might well be parallel development in the two countries, since the jongleurs and professional fools, the other early sources of influence, were common to both.

The French 'sotties' were paralleled to some extent by the German 'Fastnachtspiele', or carnival plays, which often resembled them in subject. No definite proof of the direct influence of these plays can be traced, though a resemblance between them and Heywood's interludes has been noted; but they must at least be mentioned, in view of their probable influence upon the German fool literature, which culminated in Brandt's *Narrenschiff*, published at Basel, one of the chief centres of the carnival plays. The influence exerted on the English clown by this book, translated into English by Barclay in 1509, and imitated by various writers, cannot be doubted.[1] It probably acted chiefly along the same lines as did the 'sottie', emphasizing the idea of the reign of folly, and tending to popularize the fool, and to make him a favourite vehicle for satire. The resemblance of the one extant jig, Tarlton's *Horse-Load of Fools*, to literature of this type is significant. It may be noted, too, that the series of vivid portraits which composes the *Ship of Fools* (almost an embryonic drama, indeed), aided the transition from the abstractions of the Moralities to the concrete figures of the regular drama. One more point may be mentioned—the prevalence of proverbial expressions in the *Ship of Fools*—but the clowns' proverbs have already been noticed in connexion with the 'sotties', and must be noticed again in connexion with the rustic.

Another type of German literature which certainly left its mark on the clown was the jest-book. Several of the collections of anecdotes

[1] For German and English fool literature see Herford, *Literary Relations of Germany and England in the Sixteenth Century.*

which gathered round the names of Eulenspiegel, Markolf, and other famous traditional jesters, sometimes court fools, sometimes personages of more popular origin, were translated into English during the sixteenth century, and imitated in such English collections as *Skelton's Tales*, or *Scoggin's Tales*, or, later, and most noteworthy of all, *Tarlton's Jests*. From the jest-books, German and English, was undoubtedly derived much of the 'picaresque' element in the fool's rôle, his roguery, his rude practical jokes, and his coarse jests—the 'humour of filth', as it has been called.

But here, as in other respects, foreign influence must not be exaggerated. It must never be forgotten that besides those influences common to the whole of Western Europe, there was also a purely native influence at work in the development of the stage fool. For alongside of the religious plays which represent the earliest stage of the literary drama of England, a popular drama existed, and had existed in some form for centuries, ever since the old pagan rites on which it was founded lost their original signification.[1] A 'French writer' quoted by Warton, states that the object of the institution of the religious plays was to 'supersede the dancing, music, mimicry, and profane mummeries' beloved of the people. And doubtless at an early date buffoonery of some kind found a place in the 'mimicry and profane mummeries'. How soon the fool proper appeared we do not know, since pre-Tudor references to folk-festivals are few and brief, but it is clear that he was an institution by the fifteenth century[2]—that is, in the early days of the Morality period—and probably he had existed in some form long before. Hence it seems reasonable to suppose that the fool of the regular stage owed something to this popular buffoon. That there should be interaction between the literary and the popular drama was inevitable. Proof of it is seen at an early date in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, where the leech (and possibly also his jesting servant, of whom more will be said later) is undoubtedly borrowed from the spring play, in which the doctor is an essential character. Another indication of interaction is the fact that the devil, who appears as a comic character in the religious plays, is also one of the buffoons of the folk-plays, though here it is doubtful on which side the indebtedness lies. Mr. Ordish has suggested that the influence of the popular on the literary drama operated largely through the guilds, essentially Saxon institutions, maintaining much

[1] On the folk-drama see Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*; Ordish in *Folk Lore*; Beatty, *The St. George or Mummers' Play*; Sharpe, *Sword Dances*, &c.

[2] An engraving of a morris dance dating from about 1460 shows a fool.

of the old native tradition even when their ancient sacrificial rites were replaced by miracle plays.[1]

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine exactly what part the fool of the folk-festivals played in the development of the stage fool. The buffoon of the mummers' plays as they now exist is not of much weight as evidence, since there is no means of dating his development to his present form, and it is clear that literary and sophisticating influences have been at work. And as to the nature of the character in the early days of its existence there is practically no evidence. Popular, civic, and even court revels are often so imperfectly distinguished in the scanty records which remain, that to disentangle the various elements is a hopeless task. To complicate the question further, there are suggestions of confusion between the folk-revels and the Feast of Fools. But that there was influence from the folk fools on the stage fools seems certain. Perhaps the most definite trace is the tail which sometimes forms part of the latter's dress[2]—constantly worn by the former and undoubtedly a relic of the animals' skins worn by the worshippers who were their protagonists. One of other possible links is the apparent adaptation by the Vice of *Mankind* of a joke found in many versions of the spring play.[3] These points are minor ones, but they are significant of an important one—the influence of native and popular tradition upon the stage fool. Though we are ignorant of the extent and nature of this influence we may be sure of one thing—that it was responsible for the distinctive and essentially native character of the English clown.

We have now enumerated the various types of fool from which an English dramatist of the beginning of the sixteenth century might draw inspiration. But the most common type of English clown is not merely fool or jester; he has other qualities which are not primarily fool characteristics. Very early he shows the influence of the comic servant—an ancient tradition in the drama. The early English religious plays, which have no regular fool, provide several examples of this character. Some of these figures, such as the Shipman's boy in *Mary Magdalene*, are little more than suggestions of ill-disposed boys, and their parts contain practically nothing that can be called humour. There are, however, several better developed characters, who may be represented by Trowle, the shepherd's boy of the Chester Plays, discontented with his wages and food, and ready

[1] In *Folk Lore*, 1891.

[2] e.g. Vices in *King Darius* and *Albion Knight*, and Will Cricket in *Wily Beguiled*.

[3] Furnivall and Pollard, *Macro Plays*, p. 16.

to quarrel and fight. Like him, but more vindictive, are the torturers' attendants of the Townley[1] and Cornish[2] plays, who quarrel with their masters, but not through any sympathy with their victims, towards whom they show quite as much ill will as the torturers themselves.

More closely connected with the clown, apparently, are servants of another class—those who instead of merely wrangling and fighting openly with their masters, ridicule them in asides to the audience, and insult them more or less ingeniously. Such a one is Pike-harness, Cain's boy,[3] who while Cain is crying their peace through the land after murdering Abel, mocks him in audible riming asides:

> *Cain*: I command you in the kyngis nayme,
> *Garcio*: And in my masteres, fals Cayme,
> *C*: That no man at theme fynd fawt ne blame.
> *G*: Yey, cold rost is at my masteres hame.

A better developed character is Colle, the leech's man, already mentioned. He enters seeking his master, and makes a proclamation giving a rude description of him, but when he appears Colle greets him effusively and assures him that:

> Nothyng, Master, but to your reverense,
> I have told all this audiense—
> And some lyes among!

When ordered to proclaim his master's skill he does so in ambiguous but decidedly suggestive terms:

> What dysease or syknesse that ever ye have,
> He will never leve yow tyll ye be in your grave.[4]

Too much stress must not be laid on the comic devices of these servants, since it is impossible to date them with certainty, and possibly other of their rôles besides that of Brewbarret in the York Plays may be later interpolations, influenced by the buffoons of the Moralities. The important point proved by the servants of the religious plays is the early establishment of the tradition of the comic servant, acting as comic chorus to his master's speeches or as a parody of his actions. We may safely conclude that this tradition was established by the middle of the fifteenth century, and

[1] *Buffeting Play.*

[2] *Beunans Meriasek*, translated by Stokes, pp. 207, 217.

[3] Townley plays, *Mactacio Abel.*

[4] *Play of the Sacrament*, ed. Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, pp. 73 and 74.

therefore at least a century before the appearance of the regular Elizabethan clown.

And about the time of his appearance, this impulse seems to have gained strength from a second source—the Zanni or comic servant of the Italian 'commedia dell' arte'. It is certain that the Italian drama was well known in England in Elizabethan times, for not only do many translations and adaptations of the more literary type of play exist, but also there are numerous references to the various 'masks' of the 'commedia' in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries —references which sometimes suggest connexion between the Zanni and the English clown. Florio, in 1598, explains 'Zane' as a name for 'a simple vice, clowne, foole, or simple fellow in a play or comedie'; and Nash calls Kemp a harlequin and remarks that his fame has extended to Italy.

As Miss Smith points out in her study of the 'commedia dell' arte',[1] the relation between the Italian and English stages is probably explicable mainly through direct contact between the actors. English and Italian companies frequently paid simultaneous visits to Continental cities, and as early as 1573 Italian actors began to visit England itself.[2] In 1577 'one Dronsiano, an Italian' received permission to produce plays in London—a fact of considerable significance, for this Dronsiano was undoubtedly Drusiano Martinelli, a famous performer of the rôle of Arlecchino, one of the varieties of Zanni most akin to and most likely to have influenced the English clown.

The qualities of the Zanni may be summarized in Miss Smith's words: 'Always of humble station, usually the servant and confidant of a principal character, sometimes a rascal, sometimes a dunce, oftenest a complex mixture of the two, almost always the chief plot-weaver, his main function was to rouse laughter, to entertain at all costs. One of the means he took to this end was the use of some patois; . . . another was his curious costume and mask; the most effective of all were his actions, his surprisingly dexterous gymnastic feats, his multifarious disguises, and his absurd songs and lazzi.'

It is evident from this description that there are several points of contact between the Zanni and the clown, but to determine what the latter owes to the former is not an easy matter. Of the 'lazzi' themselves not much can be made. As Perucci's list shows, many of

[1] See W. Smith, *Commedia dell' Arte*, for the general question of Italian influence on the English stage.

[2] Revels accounts for 1573 mention performances by 'the Italian players' at Windsor and Reading. See Feuillerat, *Documents*, p. 225, &c.

them are simply the old tricks of the mountebanks from whom the Zanni was largely derived, and the majority are items of ancient popular horseplay by no means peculiar to Italy and found in England before there was any possibility of Italian influence. Such are the lazzi 'of fear', 'of weeping and laughing', or 'of crying loudly'. It is possible that some of the more intellectual tricks—lawyers' quibbles, learned meditations such as Pedrolino's,[1] laments and love-rhapsodies parodying those of the Zanni's master, and the like—may have suggested some of the speeches of the English clowns; but nothing can be definitely proved, and the resemblances which exist may be merely the result of parallel development.

The same may be said to some extent of improvisation, for this again is characteristic of all popular buffoonery, and is found in England at an early date. But possibly there was here at least strengthening influence from the 'commedia dell' arte', since in them not only the incidental jesting but the whole of the dialogue was improvised.

It was as a servant and an intriguer that the Zanni probably exerted his strongest influence on the English clown. Since the Italian masks were beginning to be known in England in the early days of the regular drama, when the clown's position in the play was still undecided, it is likely that the example of the Zanni helped to make him with increasing frequency a jesting servant. Moreover, since the intriguing function of the Zanni became more important as the 'commedia dell' arte' developed, the influence which he exerted tended more and more to turn the clown into an intriguer. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Zanni was largely responsible for the scheming, mocking type of servant-clown (represented by Nimble in *Thomas of Woodstock*, 1591) described in a later chapter. Clowns of this class, as will be shown, tend to lose their fool qualities, and in the later days of the Elizabethan drama we find an increasing number of characters, of the type of Dromio and his fellows in *Mother Bombie*, who are no longer clowns but intriguing servants. Possibly these characters helped to undermine the popularity of the regular clown—certainly it was they who replaced him in the work of the later dramatists.

One more influence which seems to have played its part in the development of the stage clown must be mentioned—that of the stupid rustic. This is suggested in the first place by the fact that the term 'clown', which originally denoted a rustic, became the most common

[1] Scala, *Faithful Pilgrim Lover*.

name for the stage merry-maker.[1] Another indication is seen in the fact that stage fools other than domestic or court fools frequently, as will be shown later, wore the ordinary dress of a countryman.

No influence of the rustic upon the stage buffoon can be traced with certainty till the end of the Morality period: until then the rustic is a quite distinct figure. He appears first in the religious plays, but there is little or no attempt to make comic capital of his characteristics. The first example of a rustic whose stupidity is emphasized is Ignorance, Idleness' boy, in Redford's play of *Wit and Science*, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century—an ill-disposed, apparently half-witted peasant, who speaks an almost unintelligible dialect, and whom Idleness tries in vain to instruct. By the end of the Morality period the rustic had developed into a concrete figure. Usually, as in the case of Rusticus and Hodge of *Horestes*, these characters are simple, honest peasants, the butts of the Vices, who delight in teasing and frightening them and setting them at loggerheads by playing upon their simplicity.

The first and only Vice to show rustic characteristics is the last Morality Vice so called—Idleness in *Wit and Wisdom*, written about 1579. He is a thorough rustic, bearing, as Gayley has pointed out, a distinct resemblance to Diccon of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. He is far less astute than his predecessors, and in his varied adventures is as often the duped as the duper. Snatch, Catch, and Search treat him much as earlier Vices treated their rustic victims.

In the regular drama the influence of the rustic was largely responsible for the development of two types of clown—the mere booby, such as John Adroynes in *Promos and Cassandra*, and the more pretentious clown of the Bottom class, who is not without a certain shrewdness, but so overrates his qualities as to make his deficiencies the more ludicrous. The development of both these classes will be traced later.

The rustic also seems to have influenced the stage fool in general by providing hints for some of his favourite tricks. Misunderstandings, real or pretended, figure prominently among these devices. May not they have been suggested by the innocent blunders of the simple

[1] The earliest example of the use of 'clown' in the stage sense in contemporary literature appears in Rowlands' *Let Humours Blood*, Sat. iv. 63 (1600):

> What means Singer then?
> And Pope the Clowne, to speak so Boorish, when
> They counterfeite the Clownes upon the Stage.

The earliest certain example of its use in this sense in a play occurs in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (before 1588).

countrymen of the earlier plays? The perversion of words, accidental or intentional, seems to have been derived from the same source. The character People innocently calls Respublica 'Rice Pudding-cake', and later clowns find the intentional distortion of a name an excellent way to annoy or amuse. Probably, too, the frequent use of proverbial expressions by the clown was encouraged by the example of the rustic type; but it must be remembered that early Vices who show no other trace of rustic influence use expressions of this kind, and the example of the 'sotties' and fool literature, already mentioned, cannot be left out of account.

The rustic is the last source of influence to be mentioned in dealing with the origins of the English stage fool. How the dramatists developed and combined the hints which they obtained from these various sources, it is the object of the ensuing chapters to show.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE FOOL AS A DRAMATIC CHARACTER

SINCE the popularity of the stage fool was so great, a dramatist who wished to produce a popular play was confronted with the necessity of introducing him on every possible occasion. 'I would have the fool in every act',[1] was the cry of the people; and how best to satisfy that cry was the problem which the playwrights had to solve. Some, particularly the early anonymous writers of regular drama, seem to have troubled themselves very little on this point. The clown wanders through their plays at his own sweet will, appearing almost whenever he desires or whenever there is a pause in the action to be filled, often without the least pretext, and sometimes spoiling serious or even tragic scenes with his untimely jesting. Since so much of this incidental jesting was improvised, only occasional traces of it have survived.[2] The printer of *Tamburlaine* expressly states that he has omitted 'some fond and frivolous gestures', of no value to the play. But contemporary references show how serious this abuse of the clown's part became. Besides Shakespeare's famous attack, there is an interesting piece of satire of an earlier date on the haphazard introduction of fools. In *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* (*c.* 1598–9) occurs a scene[3] which opens with the dragging in of a clown by means of a rope. The clown asks what he is to do, to which query Dromo replies, 'Why, what an ass art thou! dost thou not knowe a play cannot be without a clowne? Clownes have been thrust into plays by head and shoulders ever since Kempe could make a scurvy face; and therefore reason thou shouldst be drawne in with a cart rope.' He then makes a few suggestions, satirizing the public taste in buffoonery, and departs, while the clown remarks, 'This is fine, y' faith! nowe, when they have noebodie to leave on the stage, they bringe mee up, and, which is worse, tell mee not what I shoulde saye!' After he

[1] Goffe, *The Careless Shepherdess*, Proeludium.

[2] e. g. stage direction in *If you know not me you know nobody*—'Enter the clown beating a soldier, and exit.'

[3] Ed. Macray, pp. 22–7.

has gone through a few of the clown's usual tricks, Dromo re-enters and drives him off, since there are now 'other men that will supplie the roome'. The evidence of these two pieces of criticism is supported by numerous other references.

In all probability the dramatists were less responsible for this abuse than the producers of the plays, who were too willing to pander to the public tastes, or the clowns themselves, who were too desirous of constant applause. But on the other hand, the dramatists seem, in many cases, to have submitted very readily to this state of affairs and to have taken little trouble with their fools' parts. In Brome's *Antipodes,* Letoy replies to a defence of extemporizing on the grounds that it was formerly allowed on the stage:

> Yes, in the dayes of Tarlton and of Kempe,
> Before the stage was purg'd from barbarism,
> And brought to the perfection it now shines with.
> Then fools and jesters spent their wits, because
> The Poets were wise enough to save their owne
> For profitabler uses.

It was less likely that a clown would indulge in untimely jesting in a play in which his part was carefully thought out and connected to some extent with the main action, than where he was an independent character, extraneous to the action, and free to make most of his part for himself. As higher dramatic ideals began to prevail, the dramatists seem to have realized that the only way to prevent the clown from spoiling their plays was to develop his part more fully themselves, and to connect it as closely as possible with the main action. They began also to see the dramatic possibilities of the character—to realize that it might be made a real asset in their plays.

To take first the development of the merry-maker's rôle in regard to importance in the intrigue. This question had found a satisfactory solution in the case of the earliest variety of English stage buffoon—the Vice of the Moralities and other transitional plays. Concerning the origin and nature of this Vice much controversy has raged. Some critics, particularly Cushman,[1] deny that this character was originally a buffoon. They consider that he was in the first place an ethical abstraction representing the 'summation' of the Seven Deadly Sins, and acting as the enemy of the good and the tempter of man, and that he only degenerated into a fun-maker in the later Moralities. The name 'Vice' would seem to support this view, for the obvious derivation is doubtless the correct one. But the fact cannot be ignored that in the earliest instances of the occurrence of

[1] *The Devil and Vice in English Literature before Shakespeare.*

the term the characters so called are jesters pure and simple, and the plays in which they occur—Heywood's *Play of Love* (1533), and *Play of the Wether* (1534)—are not Moralities. Cushman would have us believe that the name Vice is a later interpolation here, since it only occurs once in each case, but the same might be said of other instances where he does not doubt its authenticity. Moreover, apart from this early extension of the term to include merry-makers in an interlude, the fact that in the earliest contemporary references to Vices and stage fools the terms seem to be used almost synonymously suggests that the Vice was a buffoon at an early stage in his development.

The best explanation of the difficulty seems to be that offered by Ramsay,[1] who suggests that 'Vice' was the actors' name for the strongest rôle from their standpoint on the side of evil. It became desirable for dramatic purposes to concentrate the interest in one character, not necessarily the most evilly-disposed, but the most often on the stage. In the earliest Moralities this character had the function of messenger or factotum, but as time went on, to strengthen the rôle, more and more of the intrigue was given into his hands. To this character was naturally given the important function of providing comic relief, since if the attention of the public was to be held throughout a Morality, it was imperative that such relief should be introduced as frequently as possible. It was natural, too, that this function should be entrusted to a character on the side of evil, since the evil and the comic had long been associated in the vulgar mind, the devil being the chief comedian of the Mysteries. Hence came the double function of the Vice—the conducting of the intrigue and the providing of amusement.

Ramsay founds this hypothesis largely on the nature of Skelton's Vice figures, Fancy and Folly, pointing out the significant resemblance between them and Heywood's Vices. The question of the indebtedness of these and other early Vice figures to the court fool has already been discussed, and its importance for the problem of the relation of Vice and clown is obvious. Another personage who seems to mark a stage in the development of the Vice is Detractio in the oldest complete Morality extant, *The Castle of Perseverance*.[2] Detractio, or Backbiter, is a messenger in the service of the World, and some trace of the function of the later Vice is seen in the fact that he is sent by the World to introduce Mankind to Covetousness; but on the other hand he is undoubtedly a comic character, equally

[1] Edition of Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, Introduction.

[2] Furnivall and Pollard, *Macro Plays*, pp. 97–100 and 128–32.

ready to get good or evil into trouble if by so doing he can obtain amusement himself. Mirth in *The Pride of Life* is too doubtful a character to furnish any trustworthy evidence, though it is not difficult to imagine that he represents an earlier stage in the development of the type to which Backbiter belongs.

The first clear example of what eventually became the most popular type of Vice in the Moralities is Sensuality in Medwall's *Nature*, written between 1486 and 1500. There are indications of the lines on which the rôle was to develop in *Mankind*, but there the attack of the Vices on Mankind fails, and his downfall is eventually brought about by the demon Tutivillus. But in *Nature* Sensuality is the chief agent in leading Man astray. He takes him to a tavern and introduces him to other disreputable associates, and later, when Man has temporarily repented, wins him back to evil ways, and is only finally defeated by the arrival of Age.

In quite two-thirds of the remaining Moralities proper the Vice rôle is developed along these lines, and where this is the case the problem of introducing the buffoon with frequency finds its best solution, since the leader of the attack on man is of necessity continually upon the stage. A good example of the full development of the double functions of the Vice is Infidelity in Wager's *Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (1566–7), who plays a very prominent part in the action, in that he not only leads Mary astray, but also labours to harden the hearts of the leaders of the Jews against Christ, and at the same time provides constant amusement for the audience. Very similar to this type are the Vices of some of the chief political Moralities, notably *Respublica* (1553), and the *Satire of the Three Estates* (*c.* 1540). In connexion with these plays may be noticed the multiplication of the Vice rôle by three or four—a fairly frequent device in the middle period of the Moralities, but generally abandoned later in favour of concentration of the comic element in one character, *the* Vice.

No other variety of Vice attains a popularity in any degree comparable with that of the type described above, and where he plays other rôles he is rarely so successful from a dramatic point of view. Perhaps the most notable exceptions to this rule are those Vices who appear as the centre of a series of incidents, inculcating the qualities which they represent into various sets of people in turn. A prominent member of this class is Nichol Newfangle (1568), who continually joins 'like to like' in the play of that name. Very inferior in dramatic effect are those Vices who are only introduced in a sub-plot which seems to have little or no connexion with the

main plot, as is the case in *King Darius* (1565). But by far the largest class of Vices is that represented by Infidelity, and this fact is not only important as regards the Vice himself but also significant in regard to his connexion with the later clown. For in many cases this type of Vice, in order to accomplish Man's downfall, temporarily enters his service, and becomes his assistant in the gratification of his desires, and also (as has already been mentioned in connexion with the influence of the domestic fool) to some extent his jester. Since then the most popular type of Vice and the most successful dramatically has these servant qualities, and since Vices of another type, such as Sin in *All for Money* (1577), appear as ushers or factotums, it seems likely that the Vice played his part in making the conventional clown of the regular drama a servant.

Still more suggestive of this connexion between Vice and clown are the Vices of a group of plays which are not Moralities, but tragedies or romances. In each of the tragedies—*Horestes* (1567), *Cambyses* (1569–70), and *Appius and Virginia* (1575)—the Vice is apparently in service, and acts as a moving spirit throughout the play, urging his master and others to follow the particular vice which he embodies. Revenge in particular is definitely a servant, and comes in at the end, when Horestes has dismissed him, seeking a new master, much as some later clowns do. Again, like many clowns, these three Vices have another dramatic function in that as well as playing an active part in the main plot they act as the centre of minor comic incidents. There are traces of these sub-plots in the later Moralities, the climax in this respect being reached in *Wit and Wisdom* (1579), where Idleness, besides leading Wit astray, is the centre of a series of amusing adventures, dovetailed with some skill into the main action.. The connexion between the Vice and the comic servant or clown is seen most clearly in the last play of the group, the romance *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* (1599). With Subtle-Shift, the Vice of this play and the last character bearing the name, may be classed Conditions, a very similar character in *Common Conditions* (1576), who, like Subtle-Shift, is the only personage in the play who bears an abstract name. Apart from their names these characters have lost all ethical significance; they are mere self-seeking servants, intriguing for or against their masters as seems profitable to them for the time being. Hence they form a connecting link between the abstract Vice, intriguing against the good, and the concrete intriguing servant of the later drama.

We have seen, then, that in the case of the Moralities the problem of frequent comic relief was solved by concentrating the humour of

the play in a personage who was at the same time the leader of the intrigue against the good. But in the regular drama the buffoon had no such *raison d'être*, and the problem had to be solved afresh. Hence ensued in the early days of the regular drama the chaotic state of affairs described at the beginning of this chapter. As has been mentioned, some of the dramatists seem to have been too well content to leave the introduction of the clown to a considerable extent to the discretion, or lack of discretion, of the actors themselves, but as time went on the playwrights seem to have devoted more and more attention to connecting their clowns with the action of the play, and to giving them a definite part therein. In this respect, as in so many others, it is difficult to trace a chronological development, since the whole Elizabethan drama was compressed into such a short space of time that plays representing very different stages appeared almost simultaneously. But in spite of exceptions and anomalies, a general development on the lines to be indicated below may be traced.

In the first place, it may be said generally that as the drama developed the dramatists showed an increasing tendency to give the clown a place in the play by making him a servant—preferably the servant of one of the principal characters. How the tradition of the comic servant grew up in the days of the religious plays has already been shown, and it has been suggested that in all probability the success of that type of Vice possessing some servant qualities, and later the influence of the Italian Zanni, besides the constant influence of the domestic fool, strengthened that tradition and facilitated its application to the clown in general. Of all the characters specifically called clowns (excluding Shakespeare's, who are practically all retainers) quite half are definitely servants of some description, and in addition there are about as many more servants who are clearly clowns, though the name does not exist in the written versions of the plays. Such are Miles in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and Pipkin in *How to choose a Good Wife from a Bad*. It is significant that as the drama develops the proportion of servant-clowns to others becomes greater; it seems as if the dramatists came consciously or unconsciously to the conclusion that the clown could be most satisfactorily connected with the action as a servant. The advantage of the servant-clown is obvious—he may follow his master wherever he goes, whereas as an unattached character (a bandit, for example, as in Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*) the clown is, or should be, limited to certain scenes, and is much less easily involved in the intrigue. It may be said at once that the servant-fool is seldom more

*essential* to the action than are the others. In this respect Shakespeare's clowns are exceptions. Nowhere else in the Elizabethan drama do we find a fool with an importance in the action to be compared for one moment with that of Feste or the Fool in *Lear*. As a rule, when the comic servant becomes deeply involved in the intrigue, he loses the character of clown and becomes a knave. But it is obvious that the servant-clown has *ipso facto* a certain place in the intrigue. He is constantly on the stage, and to his part fall naturally such duties as the conveying of letters and messages, the delivery of which is often of considerable importance. And if he does not actually participate in the action independently, he at least as a servant knows all his master's business, and hence is invaluable as a means of conveying necessary information to the audience—an important function which was formerly part of the Vice's rôle. Moreover, his position fits him particularly well for linking a comic sub-plot to the main action—a useful office which cannot so easily be performed by an unattached clown.

The superiority of the servant-clowns to the others from a dramatic point of view may be seen to some extent at the outset if the earliest of the former class, Trotter, the miller's man in *Fair Em* (*c.* 1587), be compared with almost any of the second class for the next seven years (omitting Simplicity, who plays a vital part in *The Three Ladies of London* and its sequel, since though he is a clown the plays are Moralities). In *Sir Thomas More* (*c.* 1590), for example, the clown has the most unsuitable rôle of rebel, and thus has no place in a large portion of the play. He would obviously have had more opportunities for merry-making if he had appeared as More's servant. Trotter, on the other hand, as servant to the heroine of the play and her father, has a far more suitable and advantageous position. He is, moreover, desperately in love with his young mistress, and by appealing to his affection she prevails on him to help her in her attempt to get rid of her undesired suitors by pretending to be deaf and dumb. Thus if he is not exactly essential to the plot he has at least a suitable position to fill, and a duty to perform.

As was only natural, the non-servant clown shared to some extent in the general improvement in the dramatic status of the clown which accompanied the gradual establishment of higher artistic standards. Before the last few years of the sixteenth century this class do not show much development dramatically, but Strumbo of *Locrine* (1594) marks a distinct advance, not only on the clown who appears in one scene of *Dr. Faustus* and who represents the earliest and crudest

stage, but also on the rather better developed class represented by the rebel clowns of *Sir Thomas More* and *Jack Straw*. Much of the superiority of Strumbo is due to more careful and skilful characterization, but here, as is usually the case, development in characterization goes hand-in-hand with dramatic development, for besides acting as the centre of a comic sub-plot, being pressed into the army of Albanact, he has his part in the series of battles of which the main plot principally consists.

In the last years of the sixteenth century and the first few years of the next a marked improvement in the treatment of the clown began to appear, due, doubtless, to some extent to the influence of Greene and Shakespeare. The effect of this influence is seen most clearly in the servant-clowns, but traces of its operation are not wanting in characters of another type. In 1595, the very year after the appearance of *Locrine*, we find one of the best (dramatically) developed clowns of the non-servant class in the whole Elizabethan drama—Turnop, the leader of the rustics in Munday's play, *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. He has a suitable place in the drama, in so much as he and his companions prepare an address of welcome for some of the principal characters, and also he and his friends, in helping to bring about the discomfiture of John a Cumber, play no insignificant part in the main action. As will be shown later in dealing with the subject of characterization, Turnop probably owes a good deal to Bottom (though this point is not absolutely certain, owing to the doubt which exists as to the date of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,[1]) in which case the character is a clear proof of the early working of Shakespeare's influence on the clowns of his contemporaries.

From about this time the proportion of non-servant to servant-clowns becomes considerably smaller, and the few of the first type who still exist are usually connected with some care with the main action. Thus Will Cricket in *Wily Beguiled* (1606), besides acting as the centre of a series of comic scenes with which some of the principal characters are likewise connected, also has a part in the main action, as conveyor of information. A clown who is connected in a different but not inartistic way with the main action is Gnotho of *The Old Law* (*c.* 1599), who is the leading figure in a comic sub-plot

[1] The first transcript of *John a Kent* is dated Dec. 1595, whereas the evidence points to the beginning of that year or the end of 1594 as the date of the composition of the *Dream*. But it is just possible that *John a Kent* is identical with *The Wise-man of West Chester*, performed Dec. 2, 1594.

which is a parody of the main plot and turns upon the same motif—the making of the new law and its consequences.

But if there is a general development in the dramatic treatment of the clown, this development is particularly marked in the case of that type of fool which became most popular—the servant-clown. Since clowns of this type are so numerous, any detailed account of them is out of the question: all that can be done is to indicate a few characters representing progressive stages. Trotter, the earliest example of the type (apart from court and domestic fools proper, who may be left out of the question for the time being, since their rôles vary little, and show little chronological development) has already been described. His superiority to contemporary non-servant clowns is manifest, but it is also obvious that his creator has by no means fully grasped the possibilities of the clown as a dramatic character.

In this respect, as in others, Greene's clowns represent the high-water mark before Shakespeare. Miles in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589–90), and Slipper in *James IV* (1598), both have their parts in the action—Miles in wasting his master's seven years' labour by failing to wake him as soon as the brazen head speaks, and Slipper in stealing from his master Ateukin the letters which Bartram needs. But apart from these definite duties, both these clowns, particularly Slipper, are so cleverly and judiciously introduced into the action throughout, that it is difficult to imagine the plays without them. Slipper at least may be regarded as an integral part of the play in which he figures. He cannot, however, be regarded as representative of the servant-clown in general towards the end of the sixteenth century. During the ten years which elapsed between the appearances of Greene's two clowns, contemporary dramatists apart from Shakespeare produced no clownish servant worthy even to compare with Miles, though there are traces of a gradual general improvement. Perhaps the most notable figures of this period are Nimble, Trissillian's intriguing servant in *Thomas of Woodstock* (1591); Piston of *Soliman and Perseda* (1592), who acts as conveyor of information between the chief characters, and also takes part in a comic underplot with a braggart knight of whom he always gets the better; and Gunophilus, Pandora's unfortunate attendant in *The Woman in the Moone* (1597), who is really essential to the action in that he is the victim of all the caprices of his mistress, and the instrument used by her in the carrying out of her intrigues.

But by the end of this period Shakespeare's fools were beginning to appear. Bottom, Launce, and Launcelot had preceded Slipper, and Touchstone and Feste followed two or three years later. And

from this time becomes noticeable that marked improvement in dramatic treatment noticed in connexion with non-servant clowns, with this difference, that in the case of the servant-fools it is far more pronounced. How marked was the advance is proved by the fact that in describing the rôle of an average clown of the beginning of the seventeenth century more of the story of the play is involved than in the case of the average clown of some six or eight years before. Shadow, in *Old Fortunatus* (1600), may be compared in this way with Adam in *A Looking-Glass for London and England* (1594). Moreover, though clowns who play a prominent part in the intrigue itself are still exceptional, they appear with increasing frequency. Such are Hodge in *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602), who rescues the Earl of Bedford by impersonating him, and Stilt in *Hoffmann* (probably acted the same year), who tries throughout the play to guide his foolish master aright by good advice, and even raises a rebellion in support of his cause.

From this point it is almost impossible to trace chronological development further. Henceforth clowns vary in accordance with the degree of skill possessed by their creators, rather than in accordance with any general tendencies. As might be expected, even at this period of the stage fool's fullest development there are lapses. Frog, for example, in *The Fair Maid of Bristow* (1604), only appears two or three times in the written version of the play, and has no weight whatever in the action; and in Heywood's chronicle play *If you know not me you know nobody* (1605–6), the clown, though presumably one of Elizabeth's train, wanders through the play almost at haphazard. But apparently the difficulty of successfully introducing a clown into a chronicle play was largely responsible for the faults of *If you know not me*, and that of introducing such a typically British character into classical stories for the weakness of such plays as *The Golden Age*, for Heywood's best clowns are some of the most noteworthy of their kind, and represent the fullest development of the clown along regular lines. They will be described in more detail in connexion with the question of characterization, but the rôle of one of them, Simkin in *Fortune by Land and Sea* (perhaps written about 1607–9), may be sketched here,[1] in order to give some idea of the average importance in the

[1] Cf. with Simkin, Roger in *The English Traveller*, Clem in *The Fair Maid of the West*, and Fiddle in *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, among Heywood's clowns—also many others, e. g. Shorthose in Fletcher's *Wit without Money*, or Pipkin in *How to choose a Good Wife from a Bad*.

action of the best clowns of Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors.

Simkin is the servant of old Harding, father of Philip, the hero of the play. On his first appearance he informs his master, who has sent him to seek Philip, that the latter is about to make a match with Susan Forrest. At that moment the lovers appear, and a dispute with the father ensues. Simkin declares that he intends to 'stick to the stronger side', but he joins in Mrs. Harding's pleading for Philip. When Philip and Susan are made his fellow-servants, he is genuinely distressed, and promises to do extra work to spare them. On his next important appearance, he accosts Philip's friends Foster and Goodwin, from whom Philip wishes to borrow money, and by shrewd hints that his young master has a secret store induces them to promise assistance, but Philip spoils the scheme by avowing his poverty. During this interview Simkin acts as adviser to his master and mock-adviser to the friends. Afterwards a pursuivant meets him, and makes him deliver a proclamation, which he perverts throughout. He next appears bringing in a sailor with the news that old Harding's wealth has been lost at sea. Later, when the lovers' fortunes have improved, he acts as comic chorus during Philip's interview with his unnatural brothers and friends, and harps on the folly of their churlish behaviour in the past. At the end, promising to present the lovers with a masque, he brings in the brothers and friends in a state of destitution, and makes humorous comments upon their stories of their misfortunes, until he is checked by Philip. From this broad outline it is clear that if his rôle is not exactly essential, yet he has his part in the action, and that no insignificant or valueless one.

So much, then, for the employment of the clown in the plot. But there are other points to be noticed with regard to the development of this personage as a dramatic character. In the first place, although all stage fools provide some sort of comic relief, the dramatists naturally vary greatly in ability to choose the right moment for the introduction of this relief. In connexion with the Moralities this point need not be discussed, since there comic relief comes in almost automatically throughout, owing to the fact that the Vice is leader of the intrigue as well as merry-maker. In these plays, moreover, comedy is only needed to form a pleasing break in the edifying disquisitions which form so large a part of the Moralities,—not, as a rule, to relieve a distressing situation, since the moral plays almost always end well, and the temporary downfall of the Vice's victims does not often give rise to a situation that can, strictly speaking, be called tragic. From *Everyman*, the Morality which most nearly,

probably, approaches tragedy, the comic element is rigidly excluded. In such Vice plays as *Appius and Virginia*, tragedy is certainly present, but there again the double function of the Vice continually brings in the necessary comic relief.

It is in the regular drama that the question of introducing this relief at the psychological moment becomes important. Here once again Shakespeare is supreme. Nowhere else in the drama do we find such effects produced by the juxtaposition of the comic and the tragic—the tone clashes which Moulton describes—as we find in *Antony and Cleopatra* or *King Lear*. But in the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries we at least find attempts to blend the comic and the tragic with some degree of harmony, and these attempts are by no means wholly unsuccessful. In tragedies proper we do not find many instances of the introduction of the clown, for the greater Elizabethan tragedians make very little use of him, though they frequently introduce comic touches by means of other characters, such as the hangman in *The Spanish Tragedy*. None of the dozen tragedies (apart from Shakespeare's plays and *Dr. Faustus*) in which the fool appears are of the first rank. Many, indeed, are rambling chronicle plays rather than true tragedies. Hence, as might be expected, it is only rarely that we find in them any considerable artistic skill in the introduction of comic relief, and we usually feel grateful that the dramatist has had the grace to leave his tragic fifth act unspoiled by the intrusive presence of the clown. This, indeed, is usually the case. Almost the only clowns to appear in the final catastrophe cease their jesting as the end draws near. Piston in *Soliman and Perseda* bids farewell pathetically to his dead mistress and shares her death; and Roger in *The English Traveller* when his mistress falls stricken with remorse makes his last and his only serious speech in the play—*My sweet mistress!* But usually the clown disappears, jesting still, before the fifth act. His duty is to serve as relief to the minor tragedies which lead up to the final disaster. For this purpose he is introduced in various ways. Sometimes a clown scene is admitted into the middle of a gloomy play, as is the case in *Selimus* (1594), where Bullithrumble the shepherd, who only appears twice, provides a little diversion from the appalling tale of murders of which the play chiefly consists. Sometimes the fool is introduced in the midst of a tragic scene, often with doubtful taste, as in the execution scene in *Sir Thomas More*.[1] Considerable development in this respect is seen in a later play, *Sir Thomas Wyat*

[1] Ed. Dyce, *Shakespeare Society*, p. 35.

(1607), where the clown witnesses Homes's remorse and suicide after betraying his master, remarking, 'So, so, a very good ending: would all false servants might drink of the same'[1]—approbation largely due to his anxiety to appropriate the gold which was the price of the betrayal. The contrast between the detachment and want of feeling in the clown's remarks and the distress of mind shown by Homes is not wanting in effectiveness. Perhaps the most daring attempt in this group of plays to relieve and at the same time enhance the gloom of the tragedy, is found in *Hoffmann*, where Stilt introduces a touch of comedy immediately after the tragic death of Prince Jerome.[2] The Prince, his master, dies asking his father to provide for Stilt, but instead the Duke orders him to be tortured to death. The clown remarks, 'Provide, quoth 'a?—an you call this providing, pray let me provide for myself. Alas my poor father! he'll creep upon crutches into his grave, when he hears that his proper Stilt is cut off by the stumps'—and his last word as he is dragged off to execution is a jest.

Similar to some extent to his part in these tragedies is the part played by the clown in most of the other dramas in which he appears. For though the comedies and romances of which the clown plays chiefly consist always end happily, they often threaten for a time to become tragedy, and it is the clown's office to restore that equilibrium of life which is the essence of comedy whenever that equilibrium is too much disturbed. It may be significant that in several plays, such as *The Old Law*, the fool does not appear until Act III, when serious complications are developing. Shakespeare's contemporaries knew the trick of lowering the tone of a play when the tension is becoming too great; and some of them show an ingenuity and artistic sense in the use of it which, though not comparable with his, are by no means to be despised. In the earlier plays these attempts at comic relief are undoubtedly crude, as in *Damon and Pythias*, where the comic interlude of the duping of Grim the collier by the pages is introduced when the situation of the friends is becoming serious, and a tragedy seems imminent. But the later dramatists, instead of concentrating all their relief in one or two interludes, tend more and more to distribute it throughout the play, as is made possible by their greater skill in interweaving their clowns' rôles with the intrigue. Trying situations are continually relieved by a scene of jesting, or a song, if the clown is musical. Such judicious alternation of serious and comic scenes is seen in *How to choose a Good Wife from a Bad* (1602), where the clowning of Pipkin constantly brings the play back to the

[1] iii. 3. [2] iv. 2.

sphere of comedy. At the gravest moment of all, when Mistress Arthur is supposed to be murdered, Pipkin relieves the situation by his ludicrous manner of bringing the news.[1] This device of conveying bad news by the clown, and thus lessening the strain at painful moments, is found very frequently. Possibly it was suggested by one of the most delicate and dangerous offices of the court fool.

Also suggestive of the influence of the court or domestic fool is another function to be noted in tracing the dramatic development of the stage clown, already mentioned incidentally in the sketch of Simkin's rôle given above—that of comic chorus. As the domestic fool was privileged to indulge in free comments on any event which occurred or any matter which was discussed in his presence, so the stage fool often has in scenes which are not primarily clown scenes the minor but effective part of commentator—a rôle compared by Coleridge with that of the chorus in the ancient classic drama. This function can be developed to much advantage by a skilful dramatist, for apart from the amusement which can be derived from witty comments on the situation, these comments can often be used to strike the key-note of common sense in a scene of confused harmonies, and to put the spectator at the right point of view.

Naturally the rôle of chorus is particularly characteristic of the court and domestic fools of the drama, but it is by no means confined to them. It appears in almost the earliest stage of the written drama, for there are traces of it in the rôles of the ill-disposed servants of the Miracle plays.[2] It is a favourite trick of the Vice, who delights in uttering comic asides during the conversations of his victims or his fellow-vices, usually revealing his true nature or that of his associates in these comments. Particularly noteworthy is the scene in *The Conflict of Conscience* where Hypocrisy listens unseen to the conversation of his confederates Avarice and Tyranny, and makes appropriate remarks throughout, as, for example, when they are discussing the advisability of making friends with a third person:

> *Tyranny.* I judge him needful in our company to be,
> And therefore, for my part, he is welcome to me.
> *Hypocrisy (aside).* Friendship for gain.[3]

In the rôle of the regular stage fool this function is still more prominent, particularly in the case of the servant-clown, who naturally has exceptional opportunities of exercising it. Sometimes the clown's comments are merely intended to be entertaining, as in the case of Taber's remarks on his master's conversation with the Schoolmaster.[4]

[1] iii. 3.
[2] See above, p. 26.
[3] Dodsley, vi, pp. 48–51.
[4] *Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, ii. 2.

When the latter quotes, or tries to quote, Latin—'Quomodo vales, quomodo vales'—Taber exclaims, 'Go with you to the alehouse? I like the motion well.' But often these remarks are very apt, as is Simplicity's comment on the meeting of Fraud, Dissimulation, Simony and Usury—

> Now all the cards in the stock are dealt about,
> The four knaves in a cluster come ruffling out.[1]

Sometimes, too, they have considerable weight. The shrewd hints which Ragan, Esau's servant, conveys to his master, and his bitter comments when Esau sells his birthright, are almost anticipatory of those of Lear's fool. When Esau is excusing himself by pleading the uselessness of his birthright:

'What should I have done with my birthright in this case?'

Ragan retorts aside:

'Kept it still, and you had not been a very ass.'[2]

And occasionally, though never to the same degree as in Shakespeare's plays, the comments of the clowns, by the good sense and good feeling which reveal themselves from beneath their pretended folly, throw into sharp relief the folly of men who should be, and profess to be, wiser. This point is brought out by Malevole, who remarks on the fool Passarello's satirical hits at the follies of his master and others:

> O world most vile, when thy loose vanities,
> Taught by this fool, do make the fool seem wise.

This idea of comparison between the clown and the chief characters appears in a different aspect in another of his dramatic functions—that of parody. Sometimes the burlesque is implied in his rôle. The non-servant clown often appears as a parody of a group of characters—rebels, bandits and the like—and the figure of the servant is frequently a ludicrous imitation of that of his master, a notable example being Trimtram in *A Fair Quarrel*, who gives the keynote to his character when he says, 'Look, what my master does, I use to do the like'. Particularly are the master's foibles caricatured. Thus the character of Nicholas St. Antlings in *The Puritan*, who exclaims in horror at oaths, but asks his fellow-servants to 'make a lie' for him, parodies that of the Puritanical widow. Sometimes the clown is the centre of a sub-plot on the same lines as the main plot—usually a love-affair, as in the case of Corebus in *The Old Wives' Tale*. The servant-clowns in particular often have love-affairs in imitation of their masters. The most elaborate example of a sub-plot parodying

[1] *Three Ladies of London*, Dodsley, vi, p. 258.

[2] *Jacob and Esau*, Dodsley, ii, pp. 18-20.

the main plot is found in *The Old Law*, mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Frequently, the clown intentionally parodies the speech of the serious characters either in matter or in style. Strumbo imitates Albanaet's threats to the Scythians:

> *Alb.* For with this sword, this instrument of death,
> . . . . . .
> Ile separate thy bodie from thy head,
> And set that coward blood of thine abroach.
> *Str.* Nay, with this staffe, great Strumbo's instrument,
> Ile crack thy cockscome, paltry Scithian.[1]

So, too, Mouse parodies his betters:

> *Segasto.* Tremelio fought when many men did yield.
> *Amadine.* So would the shepherd, had he been in field.
> *Mouse.* So would my master, had he not run away.[2]

And it is in this spirit that Touchstone, when Rosalind remarks after a scene between Silvius and Phebe that in witnessing the shepherd's woes she has found her own, says in his turn, 'And I mine', and proceeds to tell the story of his love for Jane Smile.[3]

Such, then, are the lines on which the stage fool developed as a dramatic character. We have seen how the dramatists learned by degrees to weave him more and more closely into the plots of their plays (usually by making him the servant of one of the principal characters), and how great are the dramatic possibilities of the character, once his position in the action is assured. Apart from his chief duty, the providing of comic relief whenever the tension is becoming too severe, he may perform various minor functions. He may act as a link between sub-plot and main-plot; by his soliloquies he may keep the audience informed of the progress of events; by his comments in the part of comic chorus, or by parodying the foibles of the chief characters, he may help to put the spectators at the right point of view—and all this apart from the humorous potentialities of these various functions. A fool in whose rôle all or most of these possibilities have been judiciously developed is clearly no longer a stumbling-block to the orderly progress of a play or an incongruous element in its composition—rather is he a most valuable dramatic asset.

[1] *Locrine*, ii. 5.
[2] *Mucedorus*, Dodsley, vii, p. 224.
[3] *As You Like It*, ii. 4.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE FOOL IN CHARACTERIZATION—LINES OF DEVELOPMENT.

In the preceding chapter a piece of contemporary satire on the haphazard introduction of the fool was quoted. Another extract from the same play[1] will show what standard of humour he was expected to attain. Dromo is advising the clown how to entertain his audience:—'Why, if thou canst but drawe thy mouth awrye, laye thy legge over thy staffe, sawe a piece of cheese asunder with thy dagger, lape up drinke on the earth, I warrant thee theile laughe mightilie.' And other references to the 'fine scurvy faces' and the like tricks with which the fools were wont to convulse their audiences confirm the testimony which this quotation bears to the popular taste in humour at the end of the sixteenth century. But though stage tricks of a primitive nature appear to have been of primary importance to the audience, it was not to be expected that dramatists of talent and artistic taste would be content with mere crude buffoonery. As the drama develops, we see increasingly successful attempts to individualize the fool, to replace coarse and stupid sallies by true humour, and thus to transform the character into one of real artistic and literary value. An attempt to trace this evolution in characterization will be made in the two following chapters. First the different lines on which the character developed will be indicated, and then, in order to fill in the picture, a summary of the clown's most striking characteristics will be given.

It was natural that the fool should develop along various lines, in view of the complexity of his origin. For though in practically all the clowns proper we can trace the same elements, the proportion in which these elements are combined varies considerably, and sometimes one so greatly predominates as to produce a distinct type. These minor types are chiefly three—the domestic or court fool, the rustic clown, and the shrewd, jesting servant.

As has already been mentioned, domestic and court fools occur with surprising rarity in the regular drama. In some hundred fool

[1] *Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, ed. Macray, p. 22.

plays (apart from Shakespeare's) examined for the purposes of this study, there are barely a dozen certain examples, though there are a number of other clowns who may possibly belong to this class. The Vice characters who belong to some extent to this type have already been described—Fancy and Folly, Hardy-Dardy, Mery Report, and other less distinct figures. It was pointed out that Fancy and Folly seem to represent the two types of fool found in mediaeval society—natural and artificial. Fools of both these types appear in the regular drama, but the artificial greatly predominate. To this class belongs the first in time, Gelasimus, Herod's fool, in Grimald's Latin play *Archi-propheta* (1547)—a court fool pure and simple, apparently little affected by the other elements which go to compose the later clown. Gelasimus may best be described as 'a bitter fool'. He gibes scornfully at the Pharisees—'What a lot my masters mumble! Mum, mum, ba-ba, be-be. Should I not make a fine Pharisee? But such work wears out the lips.'[1] He utters some sharp home truths to Herodias,[2] and offers cynical advice to John—'If you will listen to me learn to serve the time. He cannot live who cannot be knavish.' Gelasimus, by the cynicism of his remarks, and the moral sense which they sometimes reveal, more nearly approaches Lear's fool than does any other of his class. Passarello in *The Malcontent*, sixty years later, also earns his master's comment, 'A bitter fool!' by his satirical sketches of different people about the court,[3] though he shows greater detachment than does Gelasimus. His remarks are too coarse and cynical to be really humorous, in spite of the shrewdness of his blows and the smartness of his repartee, and he is not an attractive figure, though there is at least one unusual and human touch in the study—his sense of the degradation of his position—'Well, I'll dog my lord, and the word is proper: for when I fawn upon him, he feeds me; when I snap him by the fingers, he spits in my mouth. If a dog's death were not strangling, I had rather be one than a serving-man.'

A lighter type of character is that represented by Ralph Simnell in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589–90). Though he does not appear much, it is clear that he is a mere jester, ready to enter into all his master's frolics; and though he makes some audacious hits, as where he tells the promised bride of the prince of the latter's former love affair,[4] he is Edward's abettor, not his critic. His humour is of the fanciful order, as where he devises numerous schemes

[1] ii. 2. [2] iv. 2. [3] i. 7.

[4] Gayley, *Representative Comedies*, vol. i, p. 490.

for the winning of Margaret, or asks Lacy to buy him 'a thousand thousand million of fine bels', explaining that 'every time that Ned sighs for the Keeper's daughter, Ile tie a bell about him: and so within three or foure daies I will send word to his father Harry, that his sonne and my maister Ned is become Loves morris dance'. A coarser and homelier jester is Will Summers in *When you see me you know me* (1604), and his humour does not reach a high level; but the character deserves favourable mention as being a careful and faithful study of Will, agreeing throughout with Armin's description of him, particularly in regard to his disinterestedness, his kindness to the poor, and his dislike for Wolsey. The popular Will appears again as prologue and comic chorus to *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592), but there is no attempt at characterization.

Of the natural fool we find the earliest dramatic study in Cacurgus of *Misogonus* (*c.* 1560)—an exceedingly interesting character, in that in him we have two character sketches, one of the natural fool and one of the professional jester and mischief-maker. For though in reality he is a schemer, showing a connexion with the Vice, especially the Vice servants, he deludes his old master into believing him an innocent—'a simple thinge . . . who for his simplicitie a fooles cote doth wear',[1] talking rustic dialect, babbling of his 'ganser', and petted by his 'vounder' for the sake of his songs and tales, and the scraps of information which he sometimes brings him, in return for 'some dingdonges to hang at my sleife'.[2] Cacurgus does not often appear as the natural, however, and with the exception of Lamia, the solitary female fool in the English drama, we find no more innocents until the end of the century. Patch, Wolsey's fool,[3] is a slight sketch of the stupid fool, making few jests, and quite overshadowed by Will Summers, who makes him the victim of a practical joke; but in a play a few years earlier, *Patient Grissell.*[4] we find what is probably the most delightful study of the domestic fool outside the work of Shakespeare, in Babulo, the retainer of Grissell and her father. This character (which does not appear in other versions of the story) is undoubtedly excellently drawn, and the impression which it leaves on the mind is exceedingly pleasant. Babulo's name gives the key to his character; he is a babbler, but one of the most charming of babblers. He must be classed with the natural fools, since he says that he was 'born an innocent', but he often exhibits

[1] *Misogonus*, ed. Brandl, in *Quellen des weltlichen Dramas*, p. 427.
[2] Ibid., p. 443.
[3] *When you see me you know me.*
[4] By Chettle, Dekker and Haughton (1599).

considerable shrewdness and good sense, both in his repartees and in his moralizings on life. And of good-feeling he is full, though he usually tries to hide it under jests and pretended anxiety for his own welfare. He follows uncomplainingly the fortunes of his master and mistress, with a fidelity worthy of Touchstone, encouraging them with his cheerful prattle; and though at first he appears fonder of chatter than of work, when troubles come he does his best to be useful. He appears perhaps in his most delightful aspect with Grissell's children, giving up his own pillow to them, and dandling them in his arms and soothing them with 'Hush, hush, hush, hush! and I dance mine own child, and I dance mine own child!'[1] Another no less admirable trait appears in his indignant protests against the Marquis's treatment of Grissell,[2] and the blow which he gave him in the early days of his courtship for trying to kiss her against her will. Whether Babulo is indebted to Touchstone or not is uncertain, but at least there is no slavish imitation, and he may rank as a worthy companion, though not as an equal, of Shakespeare's fools.

Among the rustic clowns again, as has already been indicated, at least two types can be distinguished—the mere booby and the more pretentious clown. On the whole it may be said that the earlier and cruder rustics belong to the former class, while the later ones have developed into something more than boors. The rustics of the Moralities and other Vice plays, mentioned in a previous chapter, are chiefly stupid, and to their tradition belong the first examples of the rustic class in the regular drama, most of whom make very brief appearances and have no claims to individuality. The clown of this type who makes the longest stay on the stage is John Adroynes, in the Second Part of *Promos and Cassandra* (1578). On his first appearance he is duped by two 'promoters' and Phallax, Promos's man, who frighten him into giving up all his money by threatening to accuse him of kissing his father's maid.[3] Later, while seeking his mare, he comes upon Andrugio in hiding, and a scene of cross-purposes (not, however, very amusing) ensues, when Andrugio tries to penetrate the clown's denseness in order to obtain news from him.[4] Fools of Adroynes' type appear again during the decay of the drama in the Boobies and Simpletons of the 'drolls'.[5]

Characters of this class are seldom very diverting, for though mere

[1] Ed. Varnhagen, *Erlanger Beiträge, &c.* (1893), p. 53-5.
[2] Ibid., p. 74.
[3] Part II, iii. 2.
[4] Part II, iv. 2.
[5] Kirkman, *The Wits, or Sport upon Sport.*

stupidity may be funny it is never truly humorous. But with the clowns of the second class we find considerable development in subtlety of characterization, and at least one example of a really humorous character. The germ from which this second type developed is seen in a clown who on the whole belongs to the first class—Grim the collier, of *Damon and Pythias* (1564–5). For though Grim is really stupid enough, he thinks himself astute;[1] and a mistaken idea of his importance and wisdom is the most striking and most humorous characteristic of the later clown. More definitely a member of this class is Poppey, the clownish burgher of *The Wounds of Civil War* (*c.* 1587), who gives condescending advice to his admiring neighbour Curtall,[2] but the sketch of Poppey is brief and slight. The first rustic with a distinct individuality is Bullithrumble, the grandiloquent shepherd of *Selimus* (1594).[3] He first appears running away from his wife, of whom he is terribly afraid, and when Corcut and his page approach him and beg for food he is again alarmed. But directly he discovers that they are only 'poor hunger-starved men', he recovers himself, and waxes pompous and condescending—'Oh, these are as a man should say beggars: Now will I be as stately to them as if I were master Pigwiggin our constable: well, sirs, come before me, tell me, if I should entertain you, would you not steal?' Eventually he concedes, 'Well, if you will keep my sheep truly and honestly, keeping your hands from lying and slandering, and your tongues from picking and stealing, you shall be master Bullithrumble's servitors'. He prides himself greatly on his fine language. Thus when he refers to 'a society of puddings' he remarks, 'Did you mark that well-used metaphor? Another would have said a company of puddings: if you dwell with me long, sirs, I shall make you as eloquent as our parson himself.' His amusing grandiloquence, like that of Dogberry, is made still more ludicrous by the perversions of words and other absurdities with which it is interlarded; and the character as a whole, though not very fully developed, is decidedly diverting.

But a more carefully characterized figure than Bullithrumble, and the most notable of his class, outside Shakespeare's plays, is Turnop in Munday's play of the following year, *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (already mentioned with regard to his dramatic importance), who may best be described as an inferior but by no means contemptible Bottom. The likeness appears most vividly in the first scene,[4] where

[1] Farmer, *Dramatic Writings of Edwards, Norton and Sackville*, pp. 53–65.
[2] Dodsley, vol. vii, pp. 189–92. [3] Grosart, *Temple Dramatists*, pp. 70–4.
[4] Ed. Collier, *Shakespeare Society*, 1851, p. 15, &c.

the troop of rustics are choosing a spokesman to deliver their address of welcome to Pembroke and Morton. When, after some disputing between Turnop and Hugh the Sexton, Tom Tabrer decides in favour of the former, he being 'my lordes man, his hogheard, his familiaritie servaunt', Turnop receives the honour with much dignity as his due—'Well, for your wisdomes in chusing me, I rest quoniam dygnitatis vestrum primarion, as the Poet Pediculus sayth; and the next vestrie bound to deferre you to severall locall places.' He duly marshals the procession and delivers the oration, of which the first quatrain is a fair sample:

> Lyke to the Cedar in the loftie sea,
> Or milke white mast upon the humble mount,
> So, hearing that your honors came this way,
> Of our rare wittes we came to give account.

At the end of this address, which reminds one strongly of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Turnop coolly remarks that he has corrected the last two lines, 'by the error of the Authour overslipped'. Throughout the play Turnop preserves the same superior and condescending demeanour. The humblest questioning of his judgement is met with some such reply as this—'Goodman Spurling, though you be purblind, and thereby are favoured for the grosse errours committed in your vocation, yet, I pray ye, commit yourselfe to your musique: as for the song, let it passe upon my prerogastride.' And his friends look up to him as much as Bottom's fellows admire him. Tom Tabrer quells a murmur with, 'Nay, either let it be as Mr. Turnop will have; or, by my troth, faire and softly, I will go no further. Either let us have credit or no credit.' Turnop's speech, like Bullithrumble's, is an absurd mixture of grandiloquent phrases and blunders. One point may be mentioned as particularly reminiscent of Bottom—his love of repeating a word with slight variations, as in the remark, 'Chance persuadeth you to remit, or submit, or admit yourselfe to the crye of your brethren.' But, as in the case of Babulo, if, as seems likely,[1] Turnop was influenced by Shakespeare, he is no mere imitation of the greater dramatist's creation, and can afford to stand on his own merits.

Turnop represents the most numerous class of rustic clowns. There is one other type of rustic—the blunt and ignorant but well-meaning and shrewd countryman, best represented by Hobs, the Tanner of Tamworth, in *Edward IV*.[2] But Hobs and his kind, though still amusing, stand almost entirely outside the sphere of clowns, since

[1] On the date see above, p. 45, note.

[2] Part I, iii. 1, 2, iv. 4, v. 5.

they lack the folly, real or assumed, which is of the essence of clownage.

This same deficiency in folly separates another class of characters from the normal type of clown—shrewd jesting servants who show few signs of stupidity, either real or pretended. Some of these personages are merely jesters, impudent to their masters and to others, and thus carrying on the tradition of the insolent servants of the religious plays. To this class belongs Ragan, Esau's sharp-tongued servant in the play of *Jacob and Esau* (1557–8), who, though he indulges in some clowning, is by no means a fool. Ragan stands at the beginning of the Elizabethan period. With him may be compared a personage dating from the end of that period—Soto, 'a merry fellow', in Middleton's *Spanish Gipsy* (1623). Though he is once referred to as a fool, Fernando's description, 'a fine knave', fits him better. He jests throughout the play, both openly and aside, in a style very different from Ragan's crude railing. He is quite aware of his master's stupidity (though he tries to keep him out of trouble, and help him to win Constanza), and makes rude asides on his master's verses as he presents them—'Botcherly poetry, botcherly!'[1] It may be noted that he is given the part of the comic servant in the play which the gipsies extemporize from Fernando's plot. In such characters as Soto's the fool element is weak, and the transition is easy to such personages as Lollio in *The Changeling* (1623), or, earlier, Lyly's jesting pages, where that element is wanting altogether.

In another type of comic servant we find the element of self-seeking, of which there is often a suggestion in the clown, strongly developed, and with it a tendency to intrigue. The protagonists of this type are the Vice servants Subtle-Shift and Conditions, already described. One of the best examples in the regular drama is Nimble, Trissillian's servant in *Thomas of Woodstock*, whose one idea is his own gain. He encourages his master in his villainy in the hope that he will share in the profits which it brings him; he enters thoroughly into the spirit of the commission given to him to spy out and arrest disaffected persons; and finally, when Trissillian has to flee for his life, Nimble, under pretence of saving him, betrays him to save himself. In the rôle of Nimble some clown qualities are still found, such as his misquotations of law-Latin, and his grandiloquent, fantastic speech, of which the following is a sample: 'always hoping of your wonted favour that when I have past the London Bridge of affliction I may arrive with you at the Westminster Hall of promotion.' But in characters such as some of Lyly's servants and those of many later

[1] ii. 1.

plays, the self-seeking, intriguing element is so developed as to swamp the fool element entirely, and the resulting figures are therefore no longer clowns. As has already been mentioned in connexion with the question of Italian influence, it was such characters as these that replaced the clownish servant in the later drama.

So much for the minor types of stage fool. What then was the chief type of clown, and in what way was he differentiated from the other varieties? To take the second question first,—in the commonest type of clown all three minor varieties are usually so blended that no one of them predominates in any marked degree, though naturally there is no sharp line of demarcation between the chief and the minor classes, and there are a number of characters whom it is difficult to classify. If the clown and the domestic or court fool be compared, it will be seen that, on the whole, the clown is usually of a coarser and more ignorant type, lacking the polish which the professional fool usually exhibits in some degree. He is stupider too, than the artificial fool, and yet he cannot be classed with the naturals, since he often shows a shrewdness quite unlike the occasional inspired flashes of the innocent. Moreover, there are a considerable number of independent clowns, and even in the case of some who are nominally retainers, there is only very imperfect development of the relations between fool and master, so important a feature in the character of the domestic fool. The coarser and more stupid qualities of the clown seem to be due to the influence of the rustic—but on the other hand the true clown is by no means as ignorant or stupid as the rustic, and shows far more knowledge of the world and its ways. It may be remarked, too, that his tastes, like Touchstone's, are usually distinctly urban. Finally, the clown is differentiated from the third minor type, not only by some of the qualities mentioned with regard to the domestic fool, but also by the almost entire absence of the intriguing tendency which characterizes that class of servants. Unlike the professional fool, he usually (when a servant) has some nominal duty to perform, but with him that duty takes only a secondary place.

These remarks may help to explain what the normal clown was not. To show what he actually was is the purpose of the following account of his development and characteristics.

Like the domestic and rustic fools of the drama, the regular clown is to some extent foreshadowed in the Moralities, though the clown function of the Vice often becomes swamped by his other function. In the earlier Vice figures (apart from Skelton's court fools) it is difficult to trace any attempt at characterization as humorous figures. Their comic qualities are always of the same primitive kind—horse-

play (chiefly consisting of blows), violent abuse, oaths, and coarse jests, often frankly indecent. But before the end of the Morality period, there is notable development in various directions. In the first place, the Vice, more than any other character in the Moralities, tends at an early date to become concrete. Even in *Mankind* we find in the four Vices concrete characters, who do much to atone for their low standard of humour by their racy and picturesque manner of speech, which, as Galey points out, is 'a fine advance in the reproduction of the vulgar'. By the end of the period the transformation from abstract to concrete is complete in all but the names. Subtle-Shift[1] is merely an intriguing servant, and Idleness in *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*, already mentioned, is a clown with a strong rustic tincture.

Idleness shows too that the Vice has developed in another way: he has become more stupid. The majority of Vices are clever intriguers, playing on others' credulity or stupidity, but in time they begin to exhibit signs of stupidity themselves. The first trace of this change is seen in those plays where one of the Vices is rather less astute than the others. Thus in *Respublica* (1553), when Avarice renames the minor Vices and himself, in order to deceive Respublica, Adulation cannot grasp the new names, and there is a scene of fooling when Avarice tries to fix them in his memory.[2] Adulation also forgets his part in conversation with Respublica, and has to try to cover up his blunders[3]—an early example of those slips of the tongue which became favourite comic devices with the later Vices, and from them were handed down to the clowns. Stupidity such as Adulation's is rare in the Vice, but nevertheless hints of it do occasionally appear, and in Idleness, the last of the Vices, we find a character who, though he sometimes deludes others, is as frequently a dupe himself. Some of his misadventures are amusing, as is the scene when Snatch and Catch bind and muffle him and leave him 'a-mumming'.[4]

Another step in the development of the Vice as a humorous character was to make him direct his fun against himself or his disreputable confederates. Jokes of this nature are much superior in artistic effect to those levelled against blameless persons, secure in the sense of superiority and certain of ultimate triumph. Thus in *King Darius* (1565), Iniquity's jests at the expense of Equity and Charity compare unfavourably with his gibes at his associates. He calls the latter 'drunken knaves', and when they inquire what he said, replies:

[1] *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes.*
[2] Ed. Magnus, *E. E. T. S.*, p. 14.
[3] Ibid., p. 19.
[4] Farmer, *Five Anonymous Plays*, pp. 274–5.

I sayed ye were two honest men, by my faye.
But surely, I did not so thynke,
No, that I dyd not, I sweare by this drynke.

These remarks reach no high standard of wit, but they mark an advance both artistically and satirically. As Gayley remarks, 'Comedy has learned a lesson of social importance when she turns her weapons, at last, against those who are deservedly objects of derision or contempt'. Sometimes we find the Vice acting as comic and satiric chorus to the conversation of his associates, as in the case of Hypocrisy mentioned in the last chapter. The later Vices, who, as a rule, have no confederates, frequently direct their uncomplimentary pleasantries against the devil. Thus Nichol Newfangle remarks on seeing him:

Sancte benedicite, whom have we here?
Tom Tumbler, or else some dancing bear?

objects to doing reverence to him; perverts the polite address which Lucifer dictates to him; and purposely misunderstands his directions before he will deign to follow them.[1] Nichol, too, since he is one of the few Vices who are definitely stated to ride off with the devil at the end, probably provided the audience with one of those scenes of clownery which are frequently described in contemporary references such as the following—'It was a pretty part in the old Church-Plays, when the nimble Vice would skip up nimbly like a Jackanapes into the devil's neck, and ride the devil a course, and belabour him with his wooden dagger, till he made him roar, whereat the people would laugh to see the devil so vice-haunted.'[2]

Nichol Newfangle is indeed one of the most distinctly individual comic characters among the Vices. Though, acting under the devil's instructions, he is the chief agent in bringing various sets of personages to grief, the ethical significance of his character is slight, and never swamps the comic element. Nichol's chief business is to amuse, and that he is quite aware of that fact is evident from the moment when he first enters with a greeting to the audience almost suggestive of the familiar 'Here we are again!' of the modern pantomime clown. Throughout the play he jests with the spectators and rallies them with the confidence of a popular comedian. For his cool rascality he has been not unjustly compared with Autolycus, and once at least he shows a distinct resemblance to that personage—when he enters with 'a bag, a staff, a bottle, and two halters, going about the place,

[1] *Like will to Like*, Dodsley, iii, pp. 309-16.

[2] Harsnett, *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603).

showing it unto the audience', and singing, 'Trim merchandise, trim, trim'.

The Vice was indeed becoming more and more definitely a professional comedian. The conversations with the audience which are so marked a characteristic of Nichol occur very frequently in the rôles of the later Vices, and comic devices of various kinds appear in increasing numbers. Besides the blunders mentioned above, pretended misunderstandings and intentional perversions are frequent, and purely comic scenes with little or no relation to the moral of the play are more often introduced than formerly. In the Vice tragedies the Vice sometimes has a scene of buffoonery with rustics on whom he plays tricks, though at least once he is punished—and that by a woman.[1] A comic touch of another kind occurs in the same play, *Cambyses* (1569–70), where Ambidexter enters 'with an old cap case on his head, an old pail about his hips for harness, a scummer and a pot-lid by his side, and a rake on his shoulder' and declares that he is on his way to meet a remarkable series of foes:

> Stand away, stand away for the passion of God;
> Harnessed I am, prepared to the field:
> I would have been contented at home to have bod,
> But I am sent forth my spear and shield.
> I am appointed to fight against a snail,
> And Wilkin Wren the ancient shall bear;
> I doubt not but against him to prevail,
> To be a man my deeds shall declare.[2]

Inclination in *The Triall of Treasure* (1567) also provides a good deal of clowning, particularly when, being bridled by the virtues, he plays the horse.[3] These comic devices sound crude, but doubtless they were amusing enough on the stage. Idleness (perhaps the Vice who is most definitely a clown, his ethical significance taking a decidedly subordinate place), creates a more subtly humorous situation in the scene where he dupes Search. The latter has been sent to arrest him, and sets him to make a proclamation demanding information concerning himself, all of which he of course perverts.[4]

Little has been said in this account of the comic value of the actual speeches of the Vice, for the reason that they seldom reach a very high level in this respect. Of true wit or humour we find very little in the Moralities. But enough has been said to show that by the end of his career the Vice had developed into a professional comedian

[1] Dodsley, iv, pp. 222–4.
[2] Ibid., p. 176.
[3] Ibid., iii, pp. 278–9, 297.
[4] Farmer, *Five Anonymous Plays*, pp. 282–4.

of no mean ability, and the clown of later years found in his tricks a comic heritage of no small worth.

For some years—roughly speaking, from about 1580 to 1590—Vice and clown overlapped, and though it is absurd to regard the latter as being directly derived from the former, it was inevitable that there should be considerable interaction. To this period belongs a transitional figure of great interest—Simplicity of *Three Ladies of London* (1584) and its sequel (1590). Though nominally an abstraction, he is in reality a purely concrete figure; and he is no Vice but a clown, the former's intriguing function being given to a group of characters with no pretensions to humour, and Simplicity's office being amusement only. His character is drawn with a care and an ingenuity which are remarkable considering his early date, and which are much superior to anything in any other clown play before Greene's. But it must be remembered that the author, Wilson, was himself a noted actor of clowns' parts, and hence had experience in the devising of comic tricks. Like all true clowns, Simplicity is a ludicrous mixture of shrewdness and stupidity. He soon detects Fraud and his associates, describes them aptly and vividly, and makes smart comments on their remarks and actions. His description of Fraud's 'arms' which he saw 'hang out of a stable-door' deserves quotation:

> Marry, there was never a scutcheon, but there was two trees rampant,
> And then over them lay a sour tree passant,
> With a man like you in a green field pendant,
> Having a hempen halter about his neck, with a knot under the left ear, because you are a younger brother
> Then, sir, there stands on each side, holding up the cres',
> A worthy ostler's hand in a dish of grease.
> Besides all this, on the helmet stands the hangman's hand,
> Ready to turn the ladder, whereon your picture did stand:
> Then under the helmet hung cables like chains, and for what they are I cannot devise,
> Except it might be to make you hang fast, that the crows might pick out your eyes.

But on the other hand, Fraud in disguise easily dupes him into wasting his money on worthless merchandise.[1] Moreover, like other clowns, he thinks himself far shrewder and wiser than he is. He patronizes the lord's pages, and cannot see that they are chaffing him when they pretend to admire him. Thus when Will explains that they are laughing 'Because your wit was so great in expounding your meaning', Simplicity remarks complacently, 'Ye may see it is

[1] Dodsley, vi, pp. 438–40.

a good thing to have wit'. Like most of his successors he devotes a great deal of thought to the subject of food and drink, of which he continually babbles, and he is absurdly afraid of his wife and anxious to conciliate her. His attempt to punish Fraud must have been a ludicrous piece of clowning. He is allowed to run at him blindfolded with a lighted torch, but being turned round first he loses his bearings, and burns a post instead, the ashes of which are shown him as being Fraud's, when he inquires in great excitement, 'Have I heated his lips? Have I warm'd his nose, and scorched his face?'[1] As a matter of fact, Simplicity is a far better developed character than any of the earliest clowns distinctly so called, and the play itself, though allegorical, has too much vitality to form an inappropriate setting.

But Simplicity's contemporaries are not worthy companions for him. With the beginning of the regular drama the development of the merry-maker as a humorous character suffers a relapse, similar to, and no doubt partly involved in, that relapse noticed in his development as a dramatic figure. The more closely a clown is connected with the action of a play, the more extensive are his opportunities for humour, particularly the subtler kinds of humour; so to some extent the development of the fool as a humorous character follows his dramatic development. It is not surprising, therefore, that Greene's clowns are the first to show any considerable merit in characterization. The earlier sketches are usually very crude. That of Trotter[2] is perhaps one of the best of them, though the rôle is a small one. The workmanship of the play is poor, but the scene of Trotter's ridiculous and presumptuous wooing of Em is quite amusing in its way, as when he breaks into verse:

> Ah, mark the device—
> For thee, my love, full sick I was, in hazard of my life,
> Thy promise was to make me whole, and for to be my wife.
> Let me enjoy my love, my dear,
> And thou possess thy Trotter here.[3]

But of such a character as Derrick in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (written before 1588), Collier's remark is just—'That Tarlton was able to make anything out of such unpromising materials affords strong evidence of the original resources of that extraordinary performer.'

Miles in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, however, who appeared shortly after Derrick, is a really humorous clown. He is a hopeless

[1] p. 501. [2] *Fair Em.*

[3] Simpson, *School of Shakespeare*, vol. ii, pp. 422–3.

dunce in spite of all his master's efforts to instruct him, but the scraps of Latin and other learning which he has picked up make his speeches the more amusing, as when he remarks in bringing in books, 'Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare libros in unum', or when, as often, he breaks into macaronic verse. Though a stupid blunderer, Miles has a good deal of wit. When Burden is depreciating Bacon's powers, Miles, who has a wholesome fear of his master, remarks of Burden, 'Marie, sir, he doth but fulfil . . . the fable of the Fox and the Grapes: that which is above us pertains nothing to us.' He shows his quickness of repartee when he replies to Bacon's challenge to prove 'ego' a substantive, 'Why, sir, let him prove himselfe and a will: 'I' can be heard, felt, and understood.' His amusing monologue while he keeps watch over 'Goodman Head',[1] is anticipatory of those of Shakespeare's clowns, while on the other hand his contented departure to hell with the devil at the end links him with the Vices of the past.

The decade which elapsed between the appearance of Miles and that of his brother-clown Slipper was a period of development in various directions. We find no personage showing an all-round advance in characterization (none, indeed, equal to Miles), and clowns of Derrick's type still appear,[2] but the improvement which many clowns show in different respects points to an increasing care in characterization. Piston in *Soliman and Perseda* (1592) provides no striking instance of wit, but his debate with himself when he is entrusted with the carcanet,[3] though scarcely humorous, shows the groundwork on which was afterwards built the immortal argument between the fiend and Launcelot Gobbo's conscience. Suggestive of later clowns, too, is his teasing of the braggart knight Basilisco.[4] His shrewd hints to his master form a link between him and the sharp-witted servants of Ragan's type, but the method which he employs is not Ragan's but that of the domestic fool, for he introduces his suggestion of false dice with the tentative remark, 'I, but heare you, Maister, was not he a foole that went to shoote, and left his arrows behinde him?'[5]

Advance in other directions is seen in Strumbo of *Locrine* (1594), a character of considerable vitality, showing the presence of various elements which had important developments later. In the first place, he anticipates some characteristics of Falstaff, for although he claims

[1] Gayley, *Representative Comedies*, vol. i, pp. 485–6.
[2] e. g. Tom Miller in *Life and Death of Jack Straw* (1593).
[3] *Soliman and Perseda*, ii. 1. [4] Ibid., i. 4.
[5] Ibid., ii. 1.

to possess great courage, when the battle begins he exclaims, 'O, horrible, terrible!' and hastens to save himself by shamming death.[1] Also, his style of speech shows one mode which was to become popular with the clown—absurdly grandiloquent language, in which Strumbo delights, particularly when wooing, albeit his sweetheart is quite unable to understand it.[2] One of his fine speeches is a parody of Euphuism—'I, maisters, I, you may laugh, but I must weepe: you may joy, but I must sorrow, sheading salt tears from the watrie fountains of my moste daintie faire eies, along my comely and smooth cheeks, in as great plentie as the water runneth from the bucking-tubbes, or red wine out of the hogs heads.' But while in grandiloquence of speech Strumbo may be held to anticipate such characters as the bombastic Don Armado, his blunders, on the other hand, link him with the Bottom class.

Within a year Bottom himself appeared, to be followed shortly by several more of Shakespeare's early clowns, so that from this time we may expect to find traces of Shakespeare's influence. One of the first of these signs is probably the change which Lyly's comic servants undergo. In most of his plays they are rather jesters than clowns, but Gunophilus, Pandora's servant,[3] and the unfortunate victim of all the changes in her disposition, is of a more clownish type. As Bond has noted, the proportion of true humour to mere superficial wit is greater in the case of Gunophilus than in that of his predecessors. Particularly in his 'rueful appreciation of his own mishaps' he seems to show the influence of the Shakespearian clown.

There is no definite trace of Shakespeare's influence in Slipper, but he is a distinctly different type from Miles, for though foolish enough to let his money be stolen, he is by no means as stupid as Miles, and his remarks are decidedly wittier and more amusing. On the whole, he is a subtler and more fanciful character. The difference between the two may be compared with the difference between their ends, for while Miles rides off on the devil's back to be a tapster in hell, Slipper is carried away by Oberon and his 'antiques'. Roundabout and fantastic speech is popular with him—also riddling answers, as when, asked where his master is, he replies, 'Neither above ground nor under ground, drawing out red into white, swallowing downe without chawing that was never made without treading', by which, as he eventually explains, he means that his master is 'in his seller, drinking a cup of neate and briske claret in a bowle of silver.' A delightful example of his allusive method of speaking is the way in

[1] *Locrine*, ii. 6.
[2] Ibid., i. 3.
[3] *The Woman in the Moone* (1597).

which he gets food and drink from the countess by hints—'Oh what a happie gentlewoman bee you trulie! the world reports this of you, Mistresse, that a man can no sooner come to your house but the Butler comes with a blacke Jack and sayes, 'Welcome, friend, heares a cup of the best for you.'' [1] He is 'swift and sententious' and ready with his answers, as when he proves that, being a horse-keeper, he is a gentleman, since 'they that do good service in the Commonweale are gentlemen; but such as rub horses do good service in the Commonweale; Ergo, tarbox, Master Courtier, a Horse-keeper is a Gentleman'. As these remarks suggest, he is important and self-satisfied, especially when ordering his new clothes.[2] Of moral sense, like most clowns, he is quite destitute. 'Will I, sir?', he replies eagerly, when offered a bribe to steal his master's letters; 'Why, were it to rob my father, hang my mother, or any such like trifles, I am at your commaundement, sir. What will you give me, sir?'

But one does not quarrel with a clown for lack of moral sense, unless the dramatist fails to make this want amusing, as is the case in *The Old Law*, which appeared a year or two after *James IV*. A comic dramatist of greater genius than Middleton could have drawn much entertaining matter from Gnotho's attempt to dispose of his old wife in order to marry a new one, but on the whole this clown is not sufficiently humorous to be anything but a distinctly unpleasant character. He is coarse and shameless, and much of his jesting is either too foolish or too grim to be funny. An example of the latter variety is his explanation of the situation of his two wives to the duke 'As the destiny of the day falls out, my lord, one goes to wedding, another goes to hanging; and your grace, in the due consideration, shall find 'em much alike; the one hath the ring upon her finger, the other a halter about her neck. "I take thee, Beatrice," says the bridegroom; "I take thee, Agatha," says the hangman; and both say together, to have and to hold, till death do part us.' He is perhaps most amusing where he moralizes, as at the end, where he poses as a much injured man—'Your grace had been more kind to your young subjects—heaven bless and mend your laws, that they do not gull your poor countrymen in this fashion: but I am not the first, by forty, that has been undone by the law. 'Tis but a folly to stand upon terms.'

Gnotho has been described partly as a warning that Slipper must not be taken as representative of the clown at the end of the sixteenth century. But from about this time we notice a decided general

[1] *James IV*, ii. 1. [2] Ibid., iv. 3.

improvement in characterization, accompanying and probably partly consequent on that improvement in dramatic treatment described in the last chapter, and like that doubtless partly due to the influence of Shakespeare. In all probability his clowns not only inspired other dramatists but also did something to cultivate the public taste in clownage. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, though a few crudely-sketched characters still appear,[1] the evolution of clowns as a class in characterization, as in other respects, reaches its highest pitch; and from this point it is impossible to trace chronological development further. All that can be done is to point out some varieties of the mature clown. The non-servant clowns, being the smaller class, may be taken first.

A character somewhat reminiscent of Gnotho, but decidedly more amusing, is Scumbroth, the convent cook in Dekker's play, *If this be not a Good Play, the Devil is in it* (1612). Like Gnotho, he is something of a rogue, but, unlike that of Gnotho and such characters as the cowardly, greedy clown of *The Four Prentices of London* (*c.* 1600), Scumbroth's roguery is on the whole rather diverting than offensive. Once or twice he appears in a merely unamiable light, as when, after receiving half the gold found by the Sub-Prior on the condition that he gives the remainder to the poor, he remarks aside, 'Foole: Ile give the blinde a dog to lead 'em, the lame shall to the whipping-post, the sick shall dye in a cage, and the hungry leap at a crust; I feede roagues, the pox shall'. But as a rule his foibles are amusing, as is his love of good cheer, which makes him an ardent ally of the demon Shacklesoul when the latter sets to work to corrupt the convent.[2] His greed emboldens him to converse coolly and impudently with the Golden Head when it appears, after the manner of Miles, as when he retorts to the remark 'That gold is none of thine', 'But all the craft in that great head of yours cannot get it out of my fingers.' Most amusing of all is the scene where, crouching in the tree which he has climbed in search of more gain, he listens in alarm to the devils' conference and makes half scared, half satirical remarks thereon, such as (when they embrace) 'Sure these are no Christian Divels, they so love one another.' The situation grows ludicrous when to his horror he discovers that his own fate is the subject of their conversation.[3]

A more attractive type of character is that represented by Barnabe Bunch 'the Botcher' in *The Weakest goeth to the Wall* (1600).

[1] e.g. Clown in *If you know not me you know Nobody.*

[2] Dekker's *Works*, ed. Bullen, vol. iii, p. 283.

[3] Ibid., pp. 326–9.

Like most clowns, he seems to have a fairly sharp eye on the main chance, for he asks Lodowick to send back as many diseases as possible from France so that he may make a good thing of grave-digging, but he is never grasping or greedy. 'Why, what do ye think of me?' he asks when offered a reward, 'a horseleech to suck ye?' He shares the exile of Lodowick and his family with unselfish devotion, and once shows remarkable delicacy—when he takes the Fleming aside while Lodowick says farewell to his wife.[1] Barnabe is always contented and good-tempered. He first appears singing at his work, his songs being scraps of ballads apparently suggested to his mind by passing events.[2] There is a ludicrous scene of misunderstanding between him and the Fleming,[3] and his wistful panegyric on English ale is also amusing—'This France I confesse is a goodly Countrey, but it breeds no Ale hearbes, good water thats drinke for a horse, and de vine blanket, and de vine Coverlet, dat is vine Claret for great outrich cobs. Well fare England, where the poore may have a pot of Ale for a penney, fresh Ale, firme Ale, nappie Ale, nippitate Ale, irregular, secular Ale, couragious, contagious Ale, alcumisticall Ale'.

Still more jovial than Barnabe, and more of a clown, is Will Cricket, the appropriately-named merry-maker of *Wily Beguiled* (1606), who is described as 'the merriest wooer in all womanshire'. He constantly acts as jester, and makes some smart answers and comments when in company with the principal characters, whose natures and relations he appears to understand fairly well. But as a lover he is, though successful, utterly ludicrous, as when he analyses his emotions in absurd terms or describes his lady's charms in language worthy of Pyramus:

> Then say I, sweet honey, honey, sugar-candy Peg,
> Whose face more fair than Brock my father's cow;
> Whose eyes do shine
> Like bacon-rine;
> Whose lips are blue,
> Of azure hue;
> Whose crooked nose down to her chin doth bow.[4]

When we turn to the servant-clowns we find such a bewildering number that it is difficult to make a selection. But in the first place one may be chosen to show what stage had been reached in the development of this type at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and thus about the middle of Shakespeare's career. For this purpose

[1] Malone Society Reprints, Sc. vii. [2] Ibid., Sc. ii. [3] Sc. iv.
[4] Dodsley, ix, p. 244.

Pipkin, the servant of Young Arthur and his wife in *How to choose a good Wife from a Bad* (1602), may be selected. He is one of the garrulous, good-for-nothing clowns who are more mischievous than helpful, but nevertheless have many attractive and even lovable qualities. It takes a considerable time to induce Pipkin to cease his chatter and start on an errand; and when he is at home the maid complains that no one can 'keep his fingers from the roast', and also that he is 'such a sloven:

> That nothing will sit handsome about him;
> He had a pound of soap to scour his face,
> And yet his brow looks like the chimney stock.'

As a scholar, too, he is hopeless, judging from the amusing scene at Master Aminadab's school (where, notwithstanding his late arrival and his lamentable ignorance of Latin, he manages to avoid punishment for once),[1] and also from his own account of his scholastic career—'Let me see, what age am I? some four-and-twenty; and how have I profited? I was five years learning to criss cross from great A, and five years longer coming to F,... And so forth: so that I am become the greatest scholar in the school, for I am bigger than two or three of them.[2]' His employment of his scraps of learning[3] reminds us of another unsatisfactory scholar, Miles. But though he is incapable of learning, he has wit enough to grasp the state of affairs between his master and mistress. Moreover, he shows good feeling as well as good sense, and seems really fond of his master and mistress. His lamentations when Mistress Arthur is supposed to be dead are apparently sincere though extravagant,[4] and his attachment to Arthur may be inferred from the new wife's order:

> Go, turn him out of doors;
> None that loves Arthur shall have house-room here.

Fleay's assignation of this play to Heywood is probably incorrect, but it cannot be denied that Pipkin, though his rôle is smaller than that of Heywood's best clowns, shows distinct affinities to them.

Some remarks on Heywood's clowns will fittingly conclude this study of the evolution of the fool in characterization; for these clowns cover practically the whole of the remainder of the fool's career, give a good idea of the variety in artistic merit shown by the fool even at this period, and include probably the best-developed fools of the whole drama apart from Shakespeare's. In the extant works of this most prolific writer at least fifteen clowns appear, ranging over a period of some forty years—roughly, from about 1594 to 1634.

[1] ii. 1. [2] iii. 1. [3] v. 1. [4] iii. 3.

As might be expected, they are of very unequal merit in characterization as well as in dramatic importance. One or two are of extreme crudeness, notably the clown of 'If you know not me'. Those of the plays on classical subjects,[1] are, as has already been mentioned, spoilt by the extreme unsuitability of their settings, if not by clumsy or careless workmanship. Thus Pompey is not only an exceedingly coarse and unpleasant character, but is totally out of place in such a story as that of Lucrece. Other clowns again, such as the one in *The Royal King and the Loyal Subject*, have too little humour or wit to be anything but dull and tedious.

But Heywood is no more faulty in these respects than many of his contemporaries, among whose clowns parallels to the imperfect characters just mentioned are easily found. And on the other hand four of his clowns stand out conspicuously not only among his own merry-makers but also among those of the whole period, and may be taken as representative in characterization as in other respects of the highest development of the clown along ordinary lines.[2] These four, Roger, Fiddle, Clem, and Simkin show distinctly individual characteristics. Roger and Fiddle may be classed together, since each is conspicuous for his wit and his elegant language. Of the two Roger is the more fantastic in speech. He delights in long fanciful accounts of scenes and events. Thus he describes a feast to his mistress in such terms as to make her believe that he has been witnessing an awful massacre, and sustains the illusion for a considerable time.[3] His wit is particularly smart and ready, and is continually commended:

> *Dalavill.* I doe not think but this fellow in time may for his wit and understanding make Almanackes?
> *Clown.* Not so, sir, you being much more iudicious than I, Ile give you the preeminence in that, because I see by proofe you have such iudgment in times and seasons.
> *Dal.* And why in times and seasons?
> *Cl.* Because you have so seasonably made choise to come so iust at dinner-time.

Fiddle's wit is also much admired. One of the best examples is the way in which he wheedles money out of Berry:

> *Fid.* Have you any skill in Arithmeticke?
> *Ber.* Why dost thou aske?

[1] *Golden Age* (date unknown), *Brazen Age* (1595?), *Rape of Lucrece* (*c.* 1604).

[2] With them may be compared Robin in Wilkins's *Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607), Shorthose in *Wit without Money* (1614?), and others.

[3] *The English Traveller* (*c.* 1627), Heywood's *Works*, vol. iv, pp. 25–6.

*Fid.* Sir, I would have you to multiply; could you not make this one shilling two or three? I would not be knowne to beg, but if you can doe this trick of multiplication I shall speeke the better. . . . So, sir, this is Multiplication, now, sir, if you know the Rule of addition you are an excellent Scholler: can you not adde?[1]

His language is very grandiloquent and eloquent, and his opinion of himself is decidedly high. After his disagreement with Bowdler he makes peace magnanimously and condescendingly, though the fault was entirely his own—'Why, then, anger avoid the roome, melancholy march away, choler to the next chamber, and here's my hand. I am yours to command from this time forth, your very mortall friend and loving enemy, master Fiddle.' And Bowdler, who, like everyone else, is fond of him, at once yields: 'Fiddle, give me thy hand, a plague on thee, thou knowest I love thee'.

Fiddle has little opportunity for the display of deeper and graver qualities, but traces of these appear in both Roger and Simkin. Roger's apparent grief at his mistress's sad end has already been mentioned[2]; and Simkin gives even clearer proof of his kindness of heart. Though at first his chief idea appears to be the prospective wedding-feast, as soon as his young master gets into trouble he is filled with pity which is evidently sincere, though extravagantly expressed, and at once promises his help.[3] He shows righteous indignation, too, at Old Harding's treatment of Philip, and the faithlessness of the latter's friends. The way in which he works upon the friends' greed to induce them to help his master is clever, and it is not his fault that his scheme fails.[4] At times too Simkin shows considerable wit, as when he replies to Philip's remark that:

None but such a father
Could so translate his children.

'Oh, Mr. Philip! I see your father is no scholar, but a meer dunce. I protest I never read a more vile translation.' He delights in puzzling his hearers by roundabout language, often quite unintelligible.[5] He is grandiloquent, too, in his speech, sometimes substituting a simpler word 'for the vulgar', in the style of Touchstone.

Clem, the Fair Maid's 'drawer', is again of a different type—coarser, more virile, and perhaps more typically English, and therefore in keeping with the play, which breathes the very spirit of Elizabethan England. He uses less ambitious language than the

[1] *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1607), Heywood's *Works*, ii, p. 29.
[2] See above, p. 51.
[3] *Fortune by Land and Sea*, ii. 1.
[4] ii. 4.
[5] iii. 1.

other three clowns, and does not so often display the finer varieties of wit, but some of the jests in which he continually indulges, in season or out of season, are very good, as is his account of the different kinds of wine,[1] or his remark when the sailors wish to have their account scored up—'They took me for a simple gull, indeed, that would have had me to have taken chalk for cheese.' Moreover, his adventures while following his mistress's fortunes on land and sea give him wider opportunities for his wit than fall to the lot of the other clowns. Thus we have the benefit of his opinion of the Moors: 'I have observed the wisdom of these Moors: for some two days since, being invited to one of the chief bashaws to dinner, after meat, seated by a huge fire, and feeling his shins to burn, I requested him to pull back his chair, but he very understandingly sent for three or four masons, and removed the chimney.' His adventures also produce some amusing accounts of his misfortunes.[2] One at least of these is due to his love of gain, a fairly prominent feature of his character. Even when his mistress is captured by bandits his chief concern seems to be for his wages.[3] But on the whole he serves her faithfully and cheerfully enough, in adversity as well as in prosperity. His jovial, kindly clowning, sustained throughout the two long parts of the play, may be taken as typical of the 'honest English clown' at his best.

[1] *Fair Maid of the West* (before 1617), *Shakespeare Society*, 1850, p. 45.
[2] e. g. p. 59. [3] p. 141.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SAME CONTINUED—SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS.

THE outline of the development of the stage fool given in the two preceding chapters is necessarily very incomplete, and can give no clear picture of the clown in general. As an attempt to supply these deficiencies, a summary will here be given of the principal characteristics of the fool both in the printed and in the acted play. Some of these qualities are common enough in themselves and by no means essentially comic, though they are converted into comic devices by the clowns. In the first place, the stage fool is almost invariably a lover of creature comforts, hating work, travel, and physical discomfort of every kind, and making a terrible fuss when any such trial falls to his lot. Particularly does he object to hunger and thirst, indeed, anxiety about food and drink is one of his earliest characteristics. It is suggested indirectly in the character of the earlier Vices and directly in that of the later ones; and it figures prominently in the rôle of Simplicity, the first pure clown, who on making Hospitality's acquaintance promptly invites himself to dinner, but scorns his plain fare, and after his murder refuses to mourn for him, because:

> He was an old churl, with never a good tooth in his head.
> . . . . . .
> He had nothing but beef, bread and cheese for me to eat.
> Now I would have had some pies, or bag-puddings with great lumps of fat.[1]

And this characteristic persists throughout the clown's history. We find Simkin gloating over the expected wedding-feast, of which he gives a fantastic description: 'This being the wedding-day of my master's eldest son, I expect rare cheer; as, first, the great spiced cake to go in, cake-bread fashion, drawn out with currants: the jealous furmety must put on his yellow hose again, and hot pies come mincing after: the boiled mutton must swim in a river of stewed broth, where the channel is made of prunes instead of pebbles, and prime raisins and currants in the stead of checker-stones and gravel

[1] *Three Ladies of London*, Dodsley, vi, p. 318.

to omit geese and gulls, ducks and dotterels, widgeons and woodcocks, of which there will be plenty'. Sometimes food of some kind seems to be used as a comic property. In *King Darius* Iniquity says to Constancy:

> Nay, then I will give you no bread and butter.
> Here, take some—

and the Simpletons of the Drolls also appear munching huge slices of bread-and-butter. In connexion with the fool's love of comfort may be mentioned another point already noticed—his preference of urban to rustic life. This is notably the case with Shorthose,[1] who laments bitterly on hearing of his mistress's intention to leave town, and rejoices greatly when she changes her mind.

Fine clothes also have considerable attraction for the clown—a characteristic probably derived partly from the natural fools, who seem to have delighted in ornaments and bright colours. Thus Slipper, on receiving his reward from Bartram, promptly lays it out on finery,[2] which he never obtains, as he loses his money, so we do not see him flaunting as we see Clem[3] and Shadow.[4] And since one needs money for fine clothes and food and drink, the clown loves money too, and uses all his wits to obtain it. Fiddle's Feste-like mode of begging has already been quoted. Other fools use more questionable methods. The clown in *Sir Thomas Wyat* appropriates the price of Homes's betrayal of his master, and Piston rifles Ferdinand's dead body.[5] Food and drink the clown often steals outright, as Mouse steals the pot of ale.[6] And for gain or 'preferment', he is often content to be a time-server, as is the case with Lentulo, who readily deserts his old master for Penulo in the hope of a place at court.[7] This love of gain sometimes leads him into trouble. An early example of this occurs in *Appius and Virginia*, where Haphazard's anxiety to claim his reward brings about his undoing; and in the same way Clem's anxiety for 'honour' gets him into trouble at the court of Fez.

This brings us to another point—the clown is frequently duped. He loves to play practical jokes, as when Revenge sets the rustics at loggerheads,[8] and Taber gets money from his master on false

[1] Fletcher, *Wit without Money*, iii. 1.
[2] *James IV*, iv. 3.
[3] *Fair Maid of the West*, Part I, Act v.
[4] Dekker, *Old Fortunatus* (*Works*, ed. Bullen, vol. i, p. 139).
[5] *Soliman and Perseda*, ii. 1.
[6] *Mucedorus*, Dodsley, vii, p. 234.
[7] *Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, Dodsley, vi, p. 182.
[8] Pickering, *Horestes*, ed. Collier in *Illustrations of Old English Literature*, vol. ii, pp. 5, 6.

pretences;[1] but on the other hand, he is quite as frequently the victim himself, either of sharper wits, as is Grim in *Damon and Pythias*, or of his own greed and folly, as is the case with Scumbroth, who mistakes the echoes of his own questions for answers, and acts upon them accordingly.[2]

Moreover, the fool is often a coward. He is ready enough to brag and threaten—the Vices are particularly conspicuous in this respect[3]—but he usually makes a poor show if anyone confronts him resolutely, even if it be only a woman. Strumbo's Falstaffian behaviour in battle has already been described. So in *The Blind Beggar of Bednall Green*, though Swash, when entrusted with his master's money, boasts mightily of his desire to meet a thief and prove his valour, as soon as the desired marauder appears he surrenders with ludicrous abjectness—'I pray you, do bind me hard, do, good Mr. Theef, harder yet, Sir.' When married, the clown is usually the humble slave of a shrewish wife, as is the case with Simplicity and Bullithrumble.

Another emotion which often exhibits the fool in a ridiculous light is that of love. Sometimes his passion is hopeless, as in the case of Trotter and Lentulo; at other times, when it is less ambitious, it is eminently successful, as is that of Cricket. But always it finds expression in a flood of absurdly extravagant exclamations. Some examples of these have already been given, but a quotation from Strumbo[4] may be added—'Oh wit, Oh pate, O memorie, O hand, O inke, O paper!' The love-affairs of two clowns are particularly noteworthy, in that they resemble Touchstone's wooing of Audrey. Frog's condescending address to Douce, ending—'as that

> Worthie Philosopher Hector ses, the words
> Of the wise do offend the foolish, so
> Douce, in few words and tedious talke
> Tell me when is the day'—

may have been inspired by the tone of Touchstone's courtship, since *The Fair Maid of Bristow* appeared some years later than *As You Like It*. The question of indebtedness is more doubtful in regard to *Nobody and Somebody*, for this play seems to have been acted about 1592 but revised about 1606. But that there was indebtedness on one side seems probable, for the way in which the clown carries off the girl from the country fellow to whom she was betrothed is decidedly

[1] Heywood, *Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, ii. 2.
[2] Dekker, *If this be not a Good Play, the Devil is in it.*
[3] e.g. Folly in *The World and the Child.* [4] *Locrine*, i. 3.

reminiscent of the manner in which Touchstone carries off Audrey from William.[1]

To come to those characteristics which belong more essentially to the clown. Of his horseplay and his more acrobatic tricks we know little, except from contemporary references, for naturally there are few records of these tricks in the printed versions of the plays. We can see, however, that there was a great deal of rough-and-tumble fighting, especially in the case of the Vices and the earlier regular clowns, who usually scatter blows very liberally around them. That this fighting was regarded as a regular source of diversion is clear from such stage-directions as the following (referring to Haphazard's fight with Marian)—'then one on the top of another make pastime'. Occasionally we have glimpses of other varieties of buffoonery. We can picture Inclination, bridled, prancing round the stage, neighing and throwing up his heels,[2] or Simplicity, blindfolded, charging at a post with his torch.[3] These traces become rarer in the later plays, though they still occur, as in *If you know not me, you know Nobody*, where the clown pulls away Beningfield's chair, remarking, 'God's pity, I think you are down'. But that there was a great deal of buffoonery which is not represented in the plays is clear from contemporary accounts, two of which have already been quoted—one concerning the Vice and the other concerning the clown. The 'scurvy faces' mentioned in the latter seem to have been particularly popular. Simon in *The Mayor of Queenborough* objects that the players' clown is 'too fair, i'faith, to make the people laugh . . . he will never look half scurvily enough'. A fuller account of the fool's tricks occurs in the Praeludium to Goffe's *Careless Shepherdess*:

> *Landlord.* . . . I'ave laughed
> Untill I cry'd again to see what Faces
> The Rogue will make: O it does me good
> To see him hold out's chin, hang down his hands,
> And twirle his Bauble. There is nere a part
> About him but breaks jests. I heard a fellow
> Once on this stage cry Doodle, Doodle, Dooe,
> Beyond compare.[4]

Similarly, of the clown's dancing but few traces remain in the plays, but contemporary references show that dances accompanied by the pipe and tabor were sometimes given between the acts, and also

[1] Simpson, *School of Shakespeare*, vol. i, p. 281.

[2] *Triall of Treasure*, Dodsley, iii, p. 279.

[3] *Three Lords and Three Ladies*, Dodsley, vi, p. 501.

[4] Cf. *Martin's Month's Mind* for account of the stage fool's tricks.

formed an important part of the concluding jig.[1] Kemp's famous morris-dance from London to Norwich proves him to have been an expert performer. In the extant plays, Slipper is the only clown who is represented as dancing with the definite purpose of giving entertainment (though one or two others take part in dances in the course of the play). In the introductory scene he and his brother the dwarf 'dance a gig devised for the nonst', and when his father again calls upon him he enters 'with a companion, boy or wench, dancing a hornpipe'.

But with regard to the songs which were so important an element in the clown's rôle, there is no such lack of evidence, for besides forming part of the inter-scenary and concluding entertainments, they were frequently interspersed in the plays themselves, and hence the record at least has survived. This is notably the case with Vices, very few of whom do not at least propose a song, even if it is not given. No other Elizabethan fool gives such an atmosphere of music to a play as Feste gives to *Twelfth Night*, but several of them are markedly musical. Simplicity, in particular, seems exceedingly fond of music, and is undoubtedly a good singer, for when he joins forces with the beggars he earns twice as much by his songs as they do. One specimen of his songs may be given:

Simplicity sings it, and 'sperience doth prove,
No biding in London for Conscience and Love.
The country hath no peer,
Where Conscience comes not once a year,
And Love so welcome to every town,
As wind that blows the houses down.
Sing down adown, down, down, down.
Simplicity sings it, and 'sperience doth prove,
No dwelling in London, no biding in London, for Conscience and Love.

And though the only complete song which we hear from Pompey is unspeakably coarse, he too seems to be a lover of music, for he appeals to the 'merry lord' Valerius to give one of his songs for his special benefit.[2] Apart from the clowns who sing whole songs, there are many others who, like Lear's fool, frequently break into fragments of ballads, suggested by some remark or passing event, 'as fooles were wont', as a stage-direction to *The Longer thou Livest the more Fool thou art* informs us. Though the trick is nowhere so effectively used as in *Lear*, it is fairly common. Barnabe Bunch's scraps of ballads,[3] suggested by incidents which he witnesses, have already been

[1] See *Pauli Hentzerii Itinerarium Germaniæ, Angliæ, Italiæ, &c.*

[2] *Rape of Lucrece*, ii. 5.

[3] *Weakest goeth to the Wall*, Sc. ii.

mentioned; and Much[1] too breaks into song in the midst of his speech to the king—'Much is my father, and he is one of your tenants, in King's Mill at Wakefield, all on a green:

O there dwelleth a jolly pinder,
At Wakefield, all on a green!

But songs and dances are, as a rule, rather in the nature of interludes than integral parts of the play. What amusement, then, did the clown provide for the audience during the progress of the action? It must be remembered that the fool more than any other performer had his audience continually in view. Other actors might forget the spectators in their rôles, but the rôle of the clown was to remember them and keep them entertained. Often, especially in the case of the later Vices, we find direct appeals to particular members of the audience, Nichol Newfangle[2] being particularly remarkable in this respect. His appeals are many and bold—'How say you, little Meg?' or:

How say you, woman? You that stand in the angle,
Were you never acquainted with Nichol Newfangle?

Simplicity too, refers to various spectators, including a fellow 'that gapes to bite me, or else to eat that which I sing'; and the absence of such appeals from the parts of later clowns probably only implies that the more experienced actors could be trusted to supply them for themselves.

Among the clown's mirth-provoking devices, nonsense of all descriptions figures largely. Sometimes this is simply unmeaning rubbish, possibly an absurd question, such as that which Mischief addresses to Mercy:

I prey yow this question to claryfye:
Driffe-draff, mysse-masche,
Sume was corn, and sume was chaffe;
My dame seyde my name was Raffe;
Or-schett yower lokke, and take an halpenye.[3]

Sometimes this nonsense takes the form of a string of contradictions, such as Mouse's description of Mucedorus (given to Mucedorus himself)—'A was a little, low, broad, tall, narrow, big, well-favoured fellow'—much in the style of the fool of the Mummers' plays. A less crude variety is the extravagant expression of some emotion, doubtless a characteristic of the natural fool. Sufficient quotations from the clown's love-speeches have already been given; but he is fully

[1] *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon.*
[2] *Like will to Like.*
[3] *Mankind*, ed. Furnivall and Pollard, *Macro Plays*, p. 3.

as ridiculous in sorrow as in love. Both Vices and clowns continually weep or threaten to do so, and the clowns in particular often indulge in extravagant laments. These are absurd even when sincere, as is Pipkin's lament for his mistress: O mistress! O Hugh! O Hugh! O mistress! Hugh, I must needs beat thee; I am mad! I am lunatic! I must fall upon thee: my mistress is dead! (*Beats Hugh*)'. And of the mock lament Simkin's is a fair sample: 'O my master! my master! what shall I do for my poor master? the kind churl is departed! never did poor hard-hearted wretch pass out of the world so like a lamb! alas! for my poor, usuring, extortioning master! many an old widow hast thou turned into the street, and many an orphan made beg their bread! Oh, my sweet, cruel, kind, pitiless, loving, hard-hearted master! he's dead; he's dead; he's gone; he's fled; and now full low must lie his head! Oh, my sweet, vile, kind, flinty, mild, uncharitable master!'[1] Other clowns tell absurd anecdotes, or give comic accounts of misadventures, as does Mouse of his encounter with the bear.

Nonsense of another kind is found in the mock prophecies often uttered by the clowns after the manner of Lear's fool. These are paralleled to some extent in the strings of impossible things which the fools of the folk-plays sometimes claim to have seen. Haphazard provides an early example of the prophecy:

> When gain is no grandsire,
> And gauds nought set by;
> Nor puddings nor pie-meat
> Poor knaves will come nigh,
> Then hap and Haphazard
> Shall have a new coat,
> And so it may happen
> To cut covetousness' throat.
> Yea, then shall Judge Appius
> Virginia obtain,
> And geese shall crack mussels
> Perhaps in the rain;
> Larks shall be leverets,
> And skip to and fro;
> And churls shall be cods-heads,
> Perhaps and also.'[2]

Some satire is often implied in these prophecies, as in *Lear*. Thus Frog vows fidelity to Douce until the time:

> When tinkers leave to drinke good ale,
> And souldiers of their weapons faile,

[1] Cf. Trombart's lament in *Locrine*.

[2] *Appius and Virginia*, Dodsley, iv, p. 130.

When pedlers go without there pack,
And water is more deare than sack,
When shoemakers drink that is small,
And lawiers have no tongues at all.[1]

A rather similar type of nonsense speech is a mock 'bill' or proclamation, an amusing example being Slipper's 'bill'—'If any gentleman, spirituall or temporall, will entertaine out of his service a young stripling of the age of thirty yeares, that can sleep with the soundest, eate with the hungriest, work with the sickest, lye with the lowdest, face with the proudest, &c., that can wait in a gentleman's chamber when his maister is a myle of, keepe his stable when tis emptie, and his purse when tis full, and hath many qualities worse than all these, let him write his name and goe his way, and attendance shall be given'. An example of the proclamation is found as early as the fifteenth century in Colle's ambiguous description of his master's powers.[2]

The subject of proclamations brings us to another point—the clown's delight in perversions and pretended misunderstandings. The perversion of a dictated address or a proclamation which he is ordered to 'cry', is a favourite device of the clown throughout his career. The later Vices provide several examples, the most quotable being Nichol Newfangle's perversion of the address dictated by Lucifer:[3]

*Lucifer.* All hail, O noble prince of hell!
*N. N.* All my dame's cows' tails fell down in the well.
*L.* I will exalt thee above the clouds.
*N. N.* I will salt thee, and hang thee in the shrouds.
*L.* Thou art the enhancer of my renown.
*N. N.* Thou art Hance, the hangman of Calais town.

And at the end of the clown's career this device still appears, as when Simkin is set by the pursuivant to make a proclamation offering a reward to anyone 'that can bring in these pirates' ships or heads', which he renders as 'that can bring in these pie-crusts or sheep's heads'.

Misunderstandings are a part of the common stock-in-trade of the clown. With the stupider type of clown these blunders are unintentional. Thus Much, when told by his master to 'make a cry', immediately begins to lament and roar, 'Help, help, help! I am undone, I am undone!' Much more common, however, are intentional blunders. To pretend to misunderstand a simple remark or order,

[1] *Fair Maid of Bristow.* [2] *Play of the Sacrament.* See above, p. 26.
[3] Cf. Sin in *All for Money* and Idleness in *Wit and Wisdom.*

or to play at cross-purposes with an interlocutor, is the clown's great delight. Cricket, when ordered to bring sack, inquires, 'Would you have a sack, sir?' and when Gripes replies angrily, 'Away, fool; a cup of sack to drink', explains, 'O, I had thought you would have had a sack to have put this law-cracking cog-foist in, instead of a pair of stocks'.[1] In Robin's sparring with Ilford and his companions, the device of quibbling and pretended misunderstanding is more subtly elaborated.[2] Misunderstandings of a cruder type are found in scenes between clowns and foreigners, such as Barnabe Bunch's conversation with Yacob the Fleming.[3]

Another type of blunder sometimes committed by the clown is a slip of the tongue. Here again there are both real and pretended blunders, but this time the first class predominates. Slips of the tongue appear first in the rôles of the stupider Vices such as Adulation,[4] who forget their parts, and even cleverer later Vices have occasional lapses. In the rôles of the regular clown neither type appears often. An example of the intentional slip is Simkin's reference to his master as a 'most tyrannical old fornicator—old master, I would say'. Somewhat akin to the pretended slip is the ambiguous remark that suggests an insult but can be interpreted harmlessly. Clem is an expert in this art.

> *Clem.* You lie, sir.
> *Roughman.* How! lie!
> *Clem.* Yes, sir, at the Raven in the High Street, I was at your lodging this morning for a pottle pot.

It is impossible to classify comic devices according to the different types of fools, since the majority of them are common to all classes, but there is one set which belongs on the whole, though by no means invariably, rather to the subtler and more highly developed characters. These fools usually have a high opinion of their own importance and qualities. This characteristic is probably partly derived from the court fool, whose importance was generally acknowledged; and there is a suggestion of it, too, in the speeches of those Vices who boast of their prevalence and power. Thus Strumbo describes himself in his love-letter as 'a gentleman of good fame and name, maiesticall, in parell comely, in gate portlie', and so on; and Clem in the days of his prosperity at Fez goes so far as to adopt the royal 'we':

[1] *Wily Beguiled*, Dodsley, ix, p. 239.
[2] Wilkins, *Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, Act I.
[3] *The Weakest goeth to the Wall*, Sc. iv.
[4] *Respublica*, ed. Magnus, *E. E. T. S.*, p. 19.

> Where be my Bashawes? usher us in state,
> And when we sit to banquet see you waite.

Moreover, the fool often insists on his own wisdom, especially as contrasted with the folly of others—a very favourite joke. Sometimes the idea is evidently a delusion, as when Simplicity advises Fraud to 'take a wise fellow's counsel'. But other remarks are obviously intended in jest. Haunce laments, 'O what a pitifull case is this! What might I have done with this wit if my friends had bestowed learning upon me? Well, when all's done, a naturall gift is worth all'; and Robin[1] brings out the contrast between himself and Ilford and his friends by retorting to the comment 'This is a philosophical fool', 'Then I, that am a fool by art, am better than you, that are fools by nature'. It is almost unnecessary to add that this idea is used constantly by Shakespeare's fools, who develop its possibilities to the utmost.

Robin also provides an example of another favourite trick—that of arguing and chopping logic, in the manner of Touchstone. When Ilford grows impatient with his replies, this dialogue ensues:

> *Ilford.* What am I the better for thy answer?
> *Cl.* What am I the better for thy question?
> *Ilf.* Why, nothing.
> *Cl.* Why, then, of nothing comes nothing.

Sir Sidney Lee has pointed out that Larivey's influence is probably largely responsible for the introduction of whimsical quibbling and chop-logic into the speech of the English clown, since it was from him that Lyly, probably the first to naturalize the fashion in England, seems to have derived it. Some of the clowns' disputations have more than a suspicion of parody of the schoolmen, and this quality is still more marked in their frequent mock-learned dissertations on various subjects. These, as has already been mentioned, undoubtedly owe much to the 'sermons joyeux', in which the Fool-Societies parodied both the offices of the Church and the rhetoric of the schools. It is the latter which is the more frequently travestied in the discourses of the fools. The most formal of these orations is the 'argument in the defence of drunkennes' pronounced by Bosse in *Every Woman in her Humour* (too long to quote) in which he proves that drunkenness is a virtue and that it 'ingenders with two of the morrall virtues, and six of the lyberall sciences'. But there are also a host of shorter speeches of the same nature, such as Pompey's account of ale:

[1] *Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, Act I.

*Pomp.* Is it not strange, my lord, that so many men love ale that know not what ale is?

*Coll.* Why, what is ale?

*Pomp.* Why, ale is a kind of juice made of the precious grain called malt; and what is malt? Malt 's M A L T: and what is M A L T? M much, A ale, L little, T thrift: that is, much ale, little thrift.[1]

Sometimes these discourses take the form of ingenious comparisons, as when Slipper proves the resemblance between a woman and a horse.

Sententiousness of another kind appears in the moral speeches in which the fools not infrequently indulge. Cricket moralizes on money,[2] and Haunce on the untrustworthiness of mankind,[3] and Firestone on drunkards: 'How apt and ready is a drunkard now to reel to the devil!'[4] Here again one is reminded of that most sententious of fools, Touchstone.

In many of the speeches included under the above heads, another element appears—that of satire, which, as was shown in an earlier chapter, was also probably bequeathed to the stage clown by the Fool-Societies. In the Vice, as was natural, considering the moral purpose of the plays in which he appears, satire is particularly prominent—indeed, the Vice is perhaps most to be esteemed as a satirist. In their accounts of their travels, such characters as Folly in *The World and the Child* imply the prevalence of their particular vice in all classes of society, and Courage in *Tide tarrieth no Man* gives us a list of the occupants of his 'Barge of Sin', after the manner of the *Ship of Fools*. And again and again the Church receives a shrewd hit in the Moralities, sometimes in the very moral of the play, sometimes in an incidental remark, such as Infidelity's slap at the friars:

> Lyke obstinate Friers I temper my looke,
> Which had one eie on a wench, and another on a boke.[5]

Occasionally the Vice's satire is political, as in *King Darius*. Besides these deeper kinds of satire, there is a lighter and more purposeless variety, usually directed, according to immemorial custom, against women. Revenge, when dismissed from Horestes's service, announces his intention of betaking himself to women, since they are usually

[1] *Rape of Lucrece*, ii. 1.

[2] *Wily Beguiled*, Dodsley, ix, p. 244.

[3] *Wisdom of Dr. Dodypoll*, ed. Bullen, *Old English Plays*, vol. iii, p. 115.

[4] Middleton, *The Witch*, i. 2.

[5] Wager, *Repentance of Mary Magdalene*, ed. Carpenter, p. 21.

kind to him, being 'for the most part . . . borne malitious'. It is this lighter kind that is most popular with the regular clowns, except in plays like *Nobody and Somebody* which are in themselves satirical. The ancient gibes at women continually recur. Thus Ralph Simnell consents to have Elinor of Castile for his mistress if

> 'shee will never scold with Ned or fight with me.—Sirah Harry, I have put her downe with a thing impossible.
>
> *Henry.* What's that, Raphe?
>
> *Ralph.* Why, Harry, didst thou ever see that a woman could both hold her tongue and her hands?[1]

The most definite and elaborate social satire spoken by a clown in any play apart from Shakespeare's is Pompey's court, camp, city, and country 'news', which is much too long to quote.[2] But though in the plays themselves satire of the more bitter kind is usually absent, it undoubtedly formed a part of the clown's rôle. The jigs, judging from the little that we know of them, seem to have been largely topical and satirical. There is evidence to show that Kemp participated in the attack on 'Martin Marprelate', and that he and his fellow-clowns did much to embitter the Puritans and the civic authorities against the stage.[3] Tarlton's jig, *A Horse-load of Fools*, includes an unflattering portrait of a Puritan Goose-son (Gosson):

> Squeaking, gibbering, of everie degree;
> A most notorious pied balde foole.
> For sure a hippocrite;
> Of a verie numerous familie.

Attacks of this kind were doubtless partly responsible for the issuing in 1612 of an order suppressing all 'Jigges, Rymes and Daunces' at the end of plays.

Nothing has been said in these notes of the ordinary repartee which plays so prominent a part in the clown's rôle, since that point was sufficiently illustrated in the last chapter. The fool carried on this play of wits not only with the other characters, but often also, as we learn from contemporary references, with the spectators themselves. Sometimes these contests are carried on in rime, as when Will Summers matches his wit against Wolsey's:

> *Wols.* The bells hang high,
> And loud they cry.
> What do they speak?

[1] *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (*Representative Comedies*, i, p. 489).

[2] *Rape of Lucrece*, ii. 1.

[3] See E. N. S. Thompson, *The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage*.

*Will.* If you should die,
There 's none would cry,
Though your neck should break.[1]

It appears, too, that the fool sometimes retorted in rime to the remarks of the spectators, and it is clear that the extemporizing of verses on subjects given by the audience was one form of the jig.

The subject of rime introduces another point—the language of the clown. This naturally varies considerably with different types of clown, but certain general characteristics may be pointed out. The medium is always prose or rime, whatever that of the principal part of the play may be. On the whole the Vices tend to speak in rime and the regular clowns in prose. No rule can be proved to have existed for the differentiation of the verse spoken by the Vice from that of the other characters in those plays which consist entirely of rough rime, though there are occasional traces of such differentiation. Puttenham referred to the use of rime 'both in the end and middle of a verse' as being 'commonly more commodiously uttered by these buffoons or vices in playes than by any other person', but this variety of metre does not occur often enough to be considered really characteristic of the Vice. Nash points out a more constant quality of the Vice's style when he characterizes it as being 'as right up and downe as may be',[2] for 'up and down' it undoubtedly is, as a general rule. It is true that the same may be said of other Morality characters of a very different type, but the Vice (especially, perhaps, the later Vice) appears to have a special predilection for verse of this kind. Haphazard exhibits this tendency in a marked degree. His prophecy, quoted above, is an unusually regular example; but the same principle governs all the verse of his part:

Then charge you the father his daughter to bring;
Then do you detain her, till proved be that thing:
Which well you may win her, she present in house.
It is but haphazard, a man or a mouse.

The serious characters in *Appius and Virginia* almost invariably use the popular 'fourteener' line.

In the earlier Moralities there are fewer traces of differentiation in metre. As a rule Vices and Virtues alike use short, rough rime. Perhaps the most characteristic tendency of these Vices is to break into stanzas, as does Hypocrisy:

[1] Rowley, *When you see me you know me.*
[2] *Strange News of intercepting certain Letters* (1592).

Methought by your face,
Ere you came in place,
It should be you:
Therefore I did abide
Here in this tide
For your coming, it is true.[1]

Short rime appears still in Moralities of a later date as a favourite metre with the Vice. On the whole, though by no means invariably, he tends to use short metre when talking to the audience or to his confederates, and longer, more imposing verse in conversation with his victims.

In style as in other respects Simplicity represents a transitional stage. In *The Three Ladies of London* he speaks in rime, but in the sequel, written six years later, his ordinary medium is prose, though he sometimes breaks into rime. These occasional snatches of verse are characteristic of the clown. He uses it frequently in his nonsense passages, especially love-raptures and laments. Specimens of the former have already been quoted,[2] and of the latter Trombart's lament over Strumbo may be taken as typical:

And is my master dead?
O sticks and stones, brickbats and bones, and is my master dead?
O you cockatrices and you bablatrices that in the woods dwell:
You briers and brambles, you cookes shoppes and shambles, come howle and yell.
With howling and screeking, with wailing and weeping, come you to lament,
O colliers of Croydon, and rusticks of Royden, and fishers of Kent.

Prophecies too are always in rime—usually in short couplets, as is Frog's address to Douce, already quoted, or that of Lear's fool. And in addition to these common uses of rime, and the riming contests and extemporized verses mentioned in the last section, fragments of verse are scattered promiscuously throughout the clowns' parts. Thus Strumbo after describing the burning of his house in his usual prose breaks into a kind of stanza:

And that which grieves me most,
My loving wife
(O cruel strife!)
The wicked flames did roast.
And therefore, Captain Crust,
We will continually cry
Except you seek a remedy,
Our houses to re-edify,
Which now are burnt to dust.

[1] *Lusty Juventus.*

[2] Cf. Trotter and Cricket.

Much, on the other hand, once begins to speak in verse but reverts to prose, remarking 'I'll speak in prose, I miss this verse vilely'.

Some of the verses found in the plays are curious mixtures of English and Latin. The earliest specimens of these macaronic rimes in the drama occur in the Moralities. Infidelity recites or chants:

> With heigh down down, and downe a down a,
> Saluator mundi Domine, Kyri eleyson,
> Ite, Missa est, With pipe up Alleluya.
> Sed libera nos a malo, and so let us be at one.[1]

There are not many specimens in the later drama, but Miles the scholar speaks throughout a whole scene in such verse as the following:

> And I with scientia and great diligentia,
> Will conjure and charme, to keepe you from harme;
> That utrum horum mavis, your very great navis,
> Like Bartlet's ship, from Oxford do skip
> With colleges and schooles, full loaden with fooles.
> Quid dicis ad hoc, worshipfull Domine Dawcocke?

and the scene at Master Aminadab's school is a similar medley.[2] Mock declensions also seem popular. Scumbroth's rimed 'declension of a gallant' is unquotable, but Simplicity's prose declension may be given:

> 'O, singulariter nominativo, wise Lord Pleasure: genitivo, bind him to that post: dativo, give me my torch: accusativo, for I say he's a cosener: vocativo; O, give me room to run at him: ablativo, take and blind me. Pluraliter per omnes casus,
> Laugh all you to see me, in my choler adust,
> To burn and to broil that false Fraud to dust'.

For Latin tinges the clown's prose even more than his verse. There is hardly a Vice or fool of even the crudest and most stupid type who does not introduce at least one Latin quotation into his speeches—usually a misquotation in the case of the clown. Scraps of Church-Latin and law-Latin predominate—'Nominus patrus', 'habis corpus', and the like.

Another fairly constant characteristic of the clown's speech is his use of proverbial expressions—sometimes Latin proverbs in the case of more learned clowns or Vices, but more often popular sayings, gleaned from the common speech of the people. Among the Vices, Revenge is particularly noticeable for his use of such saws as 'Good slepinge in a hole skynne'. So, too, Clem the clown supports

[1] *Repentance of Mary Magdalene.* Cf. macaronic letter in *Mankind* (*Macro Plays*, p. 25).

[2] *How to choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, ii. 1.

a suggestion with the old proverb, 'What they want in meat let them take out in drink'.

But in spite of these common characteristics there are two distinct types of clown language—the rude but often vigorous vernacular and the grandiloquent style. It must be remembered, however, that clowns cannot be classified according to their speech, for many of them use both kinds impartially, suiting their language to their companions. In the first type proverbs are particularly common, and there is often an abundance of racy idiom. An early foreshadowing of this style is that of the minor Vices of *Mankind*, already noticed. Perversion of words or of whole sentences is frequent in the language of such clowns as Mouse, who refers to a hermit as 'an emmet',—though this occurs too as an absurd contrast to the grandiloquence or would-be grandiloquence of more imposing clowns, such as Slipper or Turnop. Rustic dialect appears at times, and in the case of Tavie in *Club Law* and Jockey in *Edward IV* much of the humour of the characters depends upon their very marked Welsh and Scotch accents. In the earlier plays language of this rougher type is often dull and commonplace enough, but when used by dramatists of greater skill and experience it becomes very effective, and well-adapted to the essentially native and popular character of the clown.

Much more ambitious is the other type of speech—a pompous, artificial style, delighting in imposing words and flowery phrases. This characteristic has already been noticed in regard to Fiddle, and many of his brother clowns show the same propensity to use the most elaborate expressions which they can devise. Thus Taber when about to fetch drink remarks, 'I will first acquaint your lips with the virtue of the cellar'. Connected with this delight in elaborate phrases is the clown's predilection for a roundabout, riddling manner of speech. Gnatto describes his mistress's playing on the lute as 'making wood speake and guts sing',[1] and Simkin announces his intention of cleaning out the hen-house in such enigmatical language that his interlocutor is quite unable to understand him.[2] Sometimes in the elegant speeches of the clown there is distinct imitation of Euphuism, already noticed with reference to Strumbo. Learned allusions (accurate or otherwise) are sometimes introduced, such as Strumbo's to Diana and Actaeon—'Ah, Strumbo, what hast thou seen, not Dina with the Asse Tom?'—and technical terms are also

[1] *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, ll. 88-94 (Malone Society).

[2] *Fortune by Land and Sea*, ii. 1.

employed, usually absurdly, as in Scumbroth's astronomical jargon.[1] Occasionally the clown quotes from other plays, as does Clem from *Jeronimo*:

> When this eternal substance of my soul
> Did live imprisoned in this wanton flesh,
> I was a courtier in the court of Fez.

Another characteristic of the elegant style is the love of repetition. Sometimes a word is repeated with variations, as in the quotation from Turnop in the last chapter. More frequently a string of practically synonymous words is given, in the manner of Touchstone,[2] as in Frog's summoning of the guests:

> To make a step, to walke, or as it were to
> Come, or approach, to dinner.

Frog exemplifies another variety of repetition also reminiscent of Touchstone—repetition of the name of the person addressed—in his speech to Douce beginning:

> Why Douce, this day of wedlock, Douce,
> This day of going together, Douce.

The clown loves too to harp or jest on his own name if it is a suitable subject for jokes, as it very frequently is. Fiddle when called by his master retorts—'Here's a fidling indeed, I thinke your tongue be made of nothing but fiddle strings, I hope the fiddle must have some rest as well as the fiddle-sticke: well, Crowde; what say you to Fiddle now?' It may be noticed that here as often the clown speaks of himself in the third person. This repetition of his name the fool probably derived largely from such Vices as Haphazard, who harp continually on their names and their meanings.

From the Vice, too, the clown probably inherited another characteristic of his style, the frequent use of alliteration. The Vice employs this trick continually, particularly in his accounts of his travels, which are usually long lists of alliterating names. Such is Mery Report's beginning:

> At Louvain, at London and in Lombardy,
> At Baldock, at Barfold, and in Barbary.

Of the regular clowns the most noteworthy in this respect is the clown in *Love's Mistress*.[3] He sums up the merits of the poets in alliterative phrases, and gives an account of Cupid's qualities which is strongly reminiscent of Berowne's outburst on the same subject[4]—

[1] Dekker, *Works*, iii, pp. 311–12.
[2] Cf. *As You Like It*, v. 1.
[3] Heywood, *Works*, v.
[4] *Love's Labour's Lost*, iii. 1.

'I give you his stile in Folio: Hee is King of cares, cogitations, and coxcombes; Vice-roy of vowes and vanities; Prince of passions, prate-apaces, and pickled lovers; Duke of disasters, dissemblers, and drown'd eyes; Marquesse of melancholly, and mad-folkes; Grand Signior of griefes and grones; Lord of lamentations, Heroe of hie-hoes, Admirall of aymees and Mounsieur of mutton-lac'd'.

As an illustration of the remaining characteristics of the fool's style which can be noticed here, one quotation from Heywood will serve—Roger's soliloquy at the inn while young Geraldine is reading the letter which he has brought.[1] He begins—'This is Market-day, and heere acquaintance commonly meet; and whom have I encounter'd? My gossip Pint-pot, and brim full; nay, I mean to drinke with you before I part, and how doth all your worshipfull kindred? your sister Quart, your pater-Pottle (who was ever a Gentleman's fellow) and your old grandsier Gallon; they cannot chuse but be all in health, since so many healthes have been drunk out of them: I could wish them all heere, and in no worse state than I see you are in at this present'. Then Roger drinks to his 'gossip', and makes her pledge him in return, and concludes with 'one health to you and all your society in the Cellar, to Peter Pipe, Harry Hogshead, Bartholomew Butt, and little maister Randall Rundlet, to Timothy Taster, and all your other great and small friends'.

In the first place, this speech is a good example of the monologues which are so popular with the fool. Sometimes, as here, the object of these monologues is only to amuse; but sometimes, as was indicated in a former chapter, they are of dramatic value, in that they serve to inform the spectators of the progress of the action, or (notably in the case of the Vice, who habitually reveals his true character in his soliloquies) to put the audience at the right point of view. Often they are dull enough; but often too, especially when the clown gives them dramatic form by addressing some object or imaginary person, as do Roger and Miles, they reach the level of true comedy. Shakespeare's humorous monologues are unrivalled, but the materials of which they were composed may be found in those of his predecessors and contemporaries, and by no means invariably in crude or unworked form.

Roger's speech also shows a curious but common clown-trick—the habit of addressing or speaking of dumb or inanimate things as if they were human. The same characteristic appears to some extent in Simkin's description of the feast, quoted at the beginning of this chapter,

[1] *The English Traveller*, Heywood's *Works*, iv, p. 58.

and we find it again in Jenkin's account of finding the strange horses,[1] or Hodge's panegyric on the good-nature of the dust.[2]

It is hardly necessary to point out the resemblance between Roger's inquiries after 'gossip Pint-pot's' family and Bottom's inquiries after Pease-blossom's relatives; but one more point may be noticed in this connexion—the clown's love of giving nick-names, preferably alliterative, after the style of 'Peter Pipe' and 'Randall Rundlet' in this passage. This trick seems to have originated in the Vice's habit of hurling derisive and often abusive epithets at his opponents—'Peter Blowbowle', 'Tom Narrownose', 'Nicol-Noddy', and the like. Sometimes he extends these favours to the audience, as when Nichol Newfangle addresses a spectator as 'Wat Waghalter'.

This description of the characteristics of the stage fool would not be complete without some account of his dress; but to arrive at any definite conclusions on this point is no easy task. The nature of the Vice's dress is particularly doubtful. In many plays there is no mention of it, and references in other works are mostly too late to be of any service in regard to the earlier Vices. It is clear that the Vice cannot have constantly worn fool's dress. In order to deceive his victims he must have been disguised in part of the play at least, either as a virtue or as an ordinary gallant of the day. This disguising is often expressly mentioned.[3] But what did he wear when appearing in his own character? Galey states that he did not appear in regulation fool's dress until the last third of the sixteenth century; until that period he was attired as 'some typical fool of every-day life, some social crank'. But here must be mentioned once more Skelton's Vices, Fancy and Folly, of the nature of whose dress there can be no doubt—also Mery Report, whose 'light array' offends Jupiter. Mery Report, it is true, is not a Morality Vice, and Cacurgus and Hardy-Dardy, who also undoubtedly appeared as fools, are not Vices in the ordinary sense of the term. But it is clear that they are all related to the Vice of the Moralities, and their appearance in fool's dress (in the case of Mery Report, at an early date) is suggestive. The only other Morality Vice who certainly wore motley is Injury in *Albion Knight* (1565–6). Justice complains of his 'lyght apparail', and he retorts:

> Why should ye hym deeme of nature frayle
> Though as wyse as ye wolde were a Foxtayle
> Or a cote after the comen usage?

[1] *George-a-Greene* (*Ancient British Drama*, i, p. 447).

[2] Porter, *Two Angry Women of Abington* (*Representative Comedies*, i, p. 609).

[3] e.g. *Repentance of Mary Magdalene*.

Injury appears to scorn disguise; and the confusion in later references between Vices and fools supports the view that the later Vices appeared as a rule as fools. In *The Devil is an Ass*, Satan speaks of the time

> When every great man had his Vice stand by him
> In his long coat, shaking his wooden dagger.

That the Vice wore the long dress characteristic of the natural fools is suggested by other passages, notably Mirth's allusion in *The Staple of News* to 'the old way . . . when Iniquity came in like Hokos Pokos, in a jugler's jerkin with false skirts, like the knave of clubs'. Possibly, therefore, Collier is right in his conjecture that an entry in a list of 'Garments for Players', dating from 1516—'a long garment of peces and tyed with reband of blew satten, cutt'—refers to a sort of motley dress for the Vice, in which case Fancy and Folly were not the only Vices of their time to wear some kind of fool's costume.

No more information can be gleaned in regard to the Vice's dress as a whole, but there are a considerable number of allusions, especially in the case of later Vices, to articles of dress which we know from ancient sketches of professional fools (such as those collected by Gazeau [1] or the woodcuts in Barclay's *Ship of Fools*) to have often, if not always, formed part of their costume. Harsnett [2] refers to 'long Asses' ears', as being characteristic of the Vice, so he must frequently have worn a fool's cap. His dagger was one of his most important properties. The earliest certain reference to it occurs in *Impatient Poverty* (1560), but possibly one is implied in *Mankind*, nearly a century earlier. In *Mankind*, too, purses, frequently mentioned by later Vices and fools, figure prominently. Except in the case of Fancy and Cacurgus there is no definite mention of a bauble, but Nichol Newfangle brings in a 'knave of clubs', which, in view of the reference in *The Staple of News* quoted above, may perhaps be assumed to mean the figure of a fool. Perhaps too the 'flap for a flie' for which Sin begs a piece of the devil's tail [3] may be one variety of the flapper popular with the fool. The foxtail occasionally worn by Vices and clowns has already been noticed in connexion with the buffoon of the folk-plays. The spectacles worn by Inclination [4] likewise find parallels in the folk-drama—also in ancient prints of fools. These scraps of evidence go to prove that the costume of the Vice was at least partially influenced by that of the professional fool.

[1] *Les Bouffons.* [2] *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures.*

[3] *All for Money*, ed. Halliwell, *Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries Illustrated*, p. 127.

[4] *Triall of Treasure*, Dodsley, iii, p. 269.

There is uncertainty again in regard to the dress of the various types of fool found in the regular drama. In the absence of evidence, it cannot be safely assumed that because a character is undoubtedly a court or domestic jester he wore the regulation motley, for it is clear that this was not always worn by the historical fools. Will Summers's portrait shows him in ordinary court dress; and though entries in contemporary account books mention fools' coats and hoods for him and other jesters, these are for masques or other revels, and the occurrence of these entries rather supports the view that these fools were not ordinarily dressed in motley. It appears, however, that it was most usual for the court or domestic fool of the drama to wear ordinary fool's dress. Chambers points out in regard to Shakespeare's practice in this respect that possibly this idea was derived 'less from contemporary custom, for indeed we hear of no fool at Elizabeth's court, than from the abundant fool literature, continental and English'. However this may be, Shakespeare's 'motley fools' certainly found counterparts in dress among their contemporaries. Babulo and the stage Will Summers undoubtedly wore motley, and there are indications in the plays that others did the same. We find too in Henslow's Diary an entry dating from 1602 referring to 'a sewtt of motley for the scotchman for the play called the malcolm kynge of scotes'.

The personages whose dress is most difficult to determine are the doubtful characters, particularly the earlier examples of the servant-clown. Thus Saunders in *The Taming of a Shrew*, definitely called the fool, wears 'a blew coat', and insists on the fact that he is wearing his master's 'livery coat', while on the other hand, Piston, in return for services rendered, is promised 'a guarded coat', which appears to mean a fool's coat.[1] All that can be said is that there is no rule for characters of this kind. But fortunately there is no lack of evidence as to the dress which became popular with the most common type of clown. Contemporary references and illustrations leave little doubt on the subject, particularly in regard to that most popular clown Tarlton, who may have introduced the fashion. We see him dressed in rustic style—a suit of russet, with enormous breeches, a 'buttoned cap' (the usual headgear of countrymen at that time), clumsy shoes, and a large pouch at his side.[2] It is clear

[1] Cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Noble Gentleman*, v. 1:

> According to his merits he should wear
> A guarded coat, and a great wooden dagger.

[2] See frontispiece to *Tarlton's Jests*, *Tarlton's News out of Purgatory*, Chettle's *Kind-Hart's Dream*, *Cuck-Queanes and Cuckolds Errants*, and Wright's *Passions of the Mind*.

that this dress was characteristic of the most popular type of stage fool at that period—that is, at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the next. The picture of Miles strongly resembles that of Tarlton (possibly, of course, Tarlton played that rôle); and references to various parts of the dress are frequent, both in the plays and elsewhere. 'I swear by this button-cap', says Will Cricket, and Henslowe's Diary contains a reference to 'a payer of gyents hose' for Kemp. These enormous hose or 'slops' are particularly emphasized by contemporaries. Rowland remarks that 'Clownes knew the clowne by his great clownish slop'[1]; and a German description of the 'English clown' dating from 1597 runs as follows:

> Many a clownish trick he knows,
> Wears shoes that don't much pinch his toes.
> His breeches could hold two or more,
> And have a monstrous flap before.
> His jacket makes him look a fool
> With all the blows he takes so cool.[2]

Even fools of this type show traces of the influence of the ordinary fool's dress, similar to those mentioned in connexion with the Vice. The dagger appears still, though less frequently, and the pouch, or great purse, is very prominent. Cricket, too, mentions his 'fair bushtail'.

Two chief types, then, of fool's dress have been described, but no hard-and-fast rule for their use can be laid down—indeed, in the majority of cases, as with Heywood's clowns, there is not the slightest clue to the nature of the dress worn. In all probability, however, the costume of the ordinary type of clown at the period of his greatest popularity followed to some extent at least the fashion particularly associated with Tarlton, while the domestic fool proper tended to keep the traditional cap and bells.

[1] *Letting of Humours Blood in the Head Vaine*, Epigram 31.

[2] Quoted by Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, p. lx.

# CONCLUSION

We have now traced the evolution of the English stage fool from his beginnings to his fullest development. We have witnessed his gradual transformation from a crudely sketched personage, introduced almost at haphazard into a play to entertain the audience with the rudest and coarsest of buffoonery, to a character possessing true dramatic value, distinguished by individual characteristics and endowed in no mean degree with keen wit and genial humour. But the period that witnessed the highest development of the stage fool in general also saw the beginnings of his decay. This decay was not so much a deterioration in quality as a decrease in quantity. After the first decade of the seventeenth century the clown appears more and more rarely, and in the course of the next twenty years he becomes practically extinct. The cause of this gradual but complete disappearance is not easy to determine. The most usual explanation has already been hinted at—the decay of the court and domestic fools. But it seems unlikely that this was the only cause, though it may have been in some degree responsible, for the domestic fool lingered on until the eighteenth century, and even the court fool did not finally disappear until the fall of Charles I, when the stage fool had long been doomed. Another suggestion which seems still less feasible is that advanced by Drake[1]—that the pre-eminence of Shakespeare's fools led to the extinction of the character, since it was impossible to keep up the standard which they had created.

It seems most probable that the decay of the stage fool was largely the result of a gradual decrease in the demand for him, consequent on a change which came over the drama in general in the early days of the Stuarts. By that time the national interest in the drama which had been so characteristic of Elizabeth's reign had weakened, and the stage was becoming increasingly dependent on court favour. Early in James I's reign all the London companies came to be directly under royal patronage, and the production of their plays was subjected to the control of the Master of the Revels; consequently the younger dramatists came more and more under the influence of the court—of a court, moreover, that was becoming increasingly superficial and

[1] *Shakespeare and His Times.*

frivolous. With the ensuing corruption of the drama in general there is no need to deal here—the important point for the clown is the fact that from this time the drama began to lose its national character, and to become a more artificial and courtly literary form. In such a drama there was no place for the clown, who was, as we have seen, an essentially native and popular character, best suited to a society not yet too sophisticated or too highly developed. For the fool himself has a good deal of the child, of the undeveloped creature, in his nature. Frankness, that most striking characteristic of the primitive being, is continually noticeable in him—in his criticisms of others and of society in general, in the expression of his passions, notably his greed, and in his too frequent coarseness. Thus he was well suited to the Elizabethan age, which was not, on the whole, highly sophisticated; but was out of place in the more artificial state of society which came in with the Stuarts and was speedily reflected in the drama. The court gallants who then became the chief patrons of the stage demanded, not the sallies of the clown, but a constant flow of smart dialogue, enlivened by flashes of sparkling but often superficial wit. Cartwright extols the superiority of this new style to the old in an address to Fletcher:

> Shakespeare to thee was dull, whose best wit lies
> I' the ladies' questions and the fools' replies,
> Old-fashioned wit, which walk'd from town to town
> In trunk-hose, which our fathers call'd the clown.

A generation which could speak thus of Shakespeare's fools could have little use for those of his successors.

Fletcher and his collaborator Beaumont were among the first to cater for the new taste in drama. In their joint works but one fool appears, and that a poor one. And from their time onward the stage clown was doomed. As has already been pointed out, he was largely replaced by the jesting, intriguing servant, not unlike the Italian type. Naturally this change was gradual, for the older dramatists, such as Heywood, still clung to old-fashioned ways; but by the time of the closing of the play-houses the once beloved clown was banished from the regular drama for ever. It is true that during the period of the prohibition of plays, the 'drolls' by means of which lovers of the drama managed to satisfy their desires in spite of the act, perpetuated some of the buffooneries of the ancient fools; but these were only a stop-gap. After the Restoration, when a yet more artificial society prevailed than in pre-Commonwealth days, we find but one isolated attempt to revive the clown—Lobster in *Thorny-Abbey*. A significant scene occurs in Shadwell's play, *The Woman Captain* (1680). At

the opening of the play, when young Scattergood is dismissing the old servants of his father, a domestic fool appears, and pleads to be allowed to stay; but in spite of his protests he is sent packing with the rest, because ' 'tis out of fashion for great men to keep fools . . . 'tis exploded even upon the stage'.

Hence we may say that the English stage fool rose and fell with the Elizabethan drama, as befitted such a true child of his age. He had served his turn, and had become superseded by a new order of things. It is difficult for the modern reader to understand the strength of the fascination which he exerted in his day. His coarsenesses revolt us, and his rude jokes often fail to amuse. But coarse as the clowns frequently are, they compare favourably as regards morality with the characters which succeeded them on the stage; and on the other hand, as we have seen, they are by no means destitute of enduring merit. Some of their sallies and shrewd hits retain their freshness and force to-day, and among these merry-makers of a bygone age there are not a few whose acquaintance we make with pleasure, and whom we remember with affection. Without Babulo and Turnop and the clowns of Greene and Heywood the drama would be the poorer. And if this were not the case, if we sought in vain in the works of Shakespeare's contemporaries for a fool of any considerable intrinsic merit, we should still be obliged to regard the Elizabethan clown with some measure of gratitude and respect, since it is to the tradition embodied in him that we owe the fools of Shakespeare.

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